MARVEL MASTERWORKS
THE MIGHTY THOR
VOLUME 21

THE MIGHTY THOR Nos. 315-327
& ANNUAL No. 10
DOUG MOENCH, KEITH POLLARD & ALAN KUPPERBERG

MARVEL MASTERWORKS

PRESENTS

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VOLUME 21

COLLECTING

THE MIGHTY THOR Nos. 315-327

& ANNUAL No. 10

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MARVEL MASTERWORKS
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Nos. 315-327 & ANNUAL No. 10

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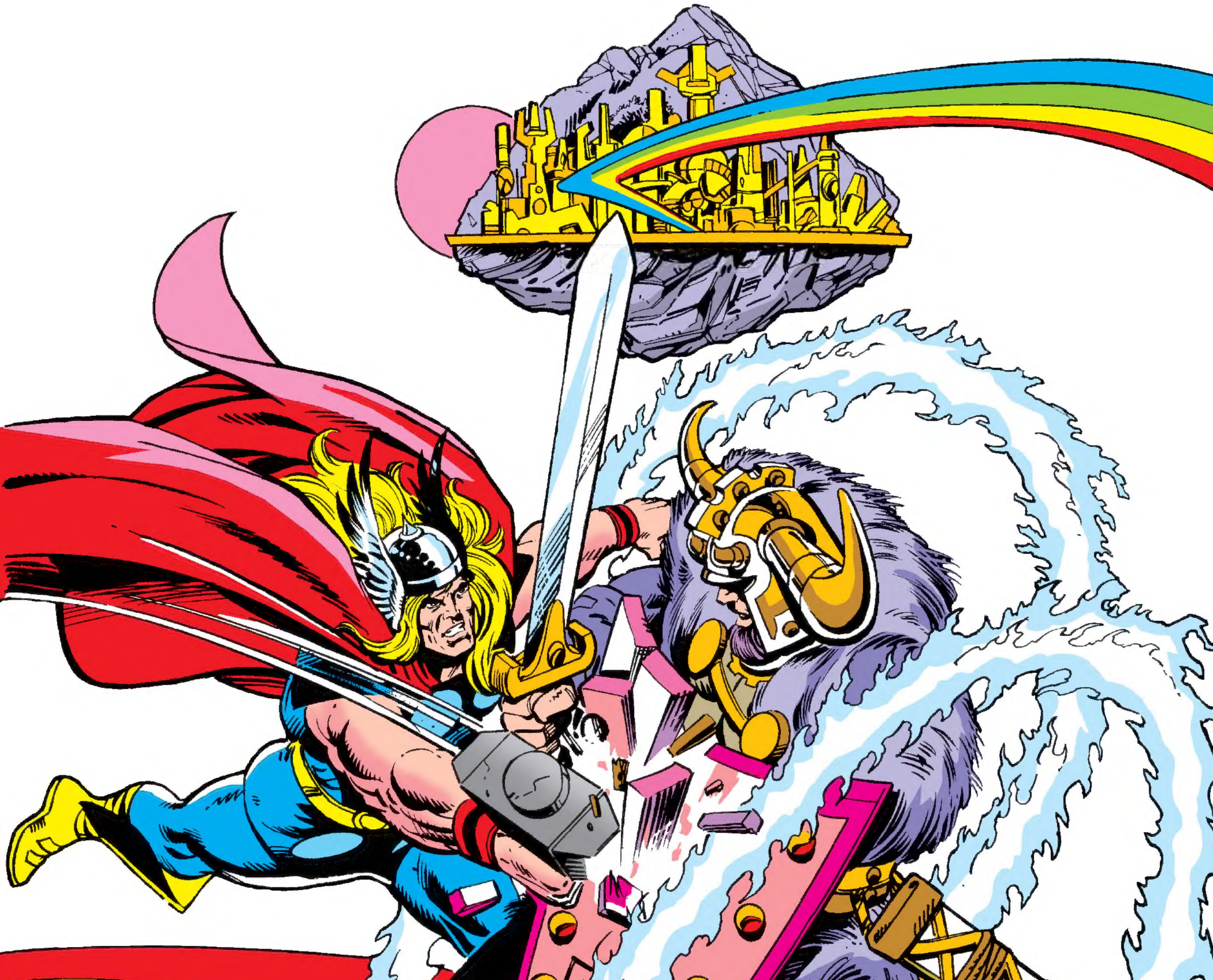

TO MIDGARD AND ASGARD AND BACK AGAIN!
AN INTRODUCTION BY J(OURNEY)I(NTO)M(YSTERY) SALICRUP

Whenever I describe my first day at Marvel Comics, I compare it to being a mere mortal who has somehow magically been transported to Asgard. I was a 15-year-old lad from the Bronx who had dreamed of one day working at Marvel Comics, and there I was, in the summer of 1972, stepping into the Marvel offices and being overwhelmed by meeting my comic book gods—Stan Lee, Roy Thomas, John Romita Sr., Herb Trimpe, Marie Severin, George Roussos and the rest of the fabled mighty Marvel Bullpen. I was hired as a messenger to deliver the original artwork of every comic book being produced back then to the Comics Code Authority, and little did I dream that one day, not that many years later, I'd be editing *The Fantastic Four*, *Marvel Two-In-One*, *The X-Men*, *Marvel Premiere*, *Marvel Spotlight*, *Marvel Tales*, *The Avengers*, *Captain America*, *The Invincible Iron Man*, and, among others, *The Mighty Thor*. Nor did I suspect that nearly half a century later I'd be writing an introduction to a volume of *Marvel Masterworks* collecting issues of *The Mighty Thor* edited by me and the late, great Mark Gruenwald.

Masterworks editor Cory Sedlmeier has done a masterful job assembling the Thor stories in this volume, starting with "A Time to Die!" from *The Mighty Thor Annual* #10. This is a perfect example of a Marvel comic edited by Mark Gruenwald, and it's a rather timely example of the impact Mark had not only on the Marvel Universe in print, but also on the Marvel Cinematic Universe. As I write this introduction, the *Loki* TV series has recently concluded its first season, featuring Owen Wilson playing Mobius M. Mobius, a character inspired by Mark Gruenwald. Some of the concerns of the *Loki* TV series, such as restoring order to the Multiverse, are seen in this comic that appeared nearly 40 years ago. It's evident that Mark co-plotted (with writer Alan Zelenetz) this *Annual*, as it also explains where all the gods in the Marvel Universe came from. Mark was always explaining the Marvel Universe in one way or another. And if that wasn't enough, he even commissioned a map of Asgard, by Peter B. Gillis and Tom Orzechowski. Can you imagine the expense report those two probably turned in? This *Annual* is all about big ideas and cosmic concepts that make the Marvel Universe endlessly fascinating to explore. It also should be noted that we also get to see a side of Thor we had never seen before—his backside (check out page 32, if you think I'm kidding!). Mark had a distinctive sense of humor and must've enjoyed this bit.

Things literally get back down to Earth with the first story collected here that was edited by me, "The Thunder God and the Bi-Beast," from *Thor* #315. While writer Doug Moench would've happily preferred to tell more Asgard-based Thor tales, we were directed to keep Thor Earth-bound. Our editor-in-chief, Jim Shooter, was attempting to make all Marvel titles at that time more accessible to potential new readers by going back-to-basics, returning to the original premises, style and feel of the early '60s Marvel Comics. And, in the case of *Thor*, that meant a return to the one-part stories Stan Lee, Larry Lieber and Jack Kirby used to do featuring Thor's mortal identity Dr. Donald Blake way back in the *Journey Into Mystery* days. *The Avengers*, which I also edited, was also trying to get back to its roots by bringing back original members Iron Man and Thor. So, it made continuity sense to keep Thor on Earth so he could show up for Avengers meetings, and we didn't have to explain how he could do that if he was flying off in space on a mission for Odin in his own mag. Although there was tight continuity between issues of *Thor*, even if they seemed like one-part stories. "The Thunder God and the Bi-Beast" lead right into "Of Beasts and Things…," which rocketed right into "Chaos at Canaveral."

In "Of Beasts and Things…" we are treated to the aforementioned charter Avengers teaming up to tackle both the Bi-Beast and the Man-Beast (formerly known as Super-Beast). I can't remember if I suggested these beastly baddies (it sure sounds like something I'd impose out of sheer silliness) or if Doug dreamed it up, after all Doug was known for horror comics writing, especially his great run on *Werewolf by Night*. I can easily see how it was irresistible to include Florida's resident muck-monster the Man-Thing in this mad monster party.

If I may make an editorial aside here, while I hope you enjoy each of the stories I'm introducing here, I must confess that it's slightly painful for me to see all the typos I missed when editing these comics decades ago. For example, on page 109, panel 6, first caption, the Man-Thing is referred to as "much encrusted." While that's technically correct, we really meant to say "muck encrusted." I'll let you find the rest of my proofreading mistakes on your own. Hey, maybe that'll even add another element of fun to reading these stories, like those find-the-mistakes picture puzzles. If you send in a list of all the beastly boo-boos perhaps Mr. Sedlmeier will send you a genuine Marvel No-Prize?

While I may not personally enjoy finding these mistakes, one thing I do enjoy when I read Doug Moench's comics is his always creative sound effects. These stories were all created using the old Marvel Method of the writer providing a plot outline to the artist, and then scripting the pages after the artist penciled or laid out the pages. In Doug's case his "plots" were so detailed that they were virtually scripts—all they were missing was the actual final dialogue. But if memory serves, Doug told me that when he got the art pages to script, the first thing he did was write the sound effects. I really enjoy every FHWAM, SPUNCH, SWOKK and SPROKK. Oh, and I must point out that during a brief outer space sequence, that there are no sound effects or even dialogue. After all, there's no sound in space. Man-Beasts and Thunder Gods are another matter. And to get even further into comic-making minutia, also note that there are no exclamation points after Doug's sound effects. This is a deliberate decision regarding SFX (as we call "sound effects" in the comics biz) that some writers and editors make, while others prefer using exclamation points. While Stan Lee used exclamation points with his SFX, I'm with Doug in the no exclamation points school of SFX.

I should also mention that artists Bob Hall and Keith Pollard have something in common—aside from being incredibly dynamic comic book artists, they both are very inspired by the work of legendary Marvel artist John Buscema. Bob even attended Buscema's drawing class. It made sense to have these artists draw Thor stories as they were both following a long run of *Thor* issues illustrated by Buscema, who was the artist who followed Jack Kirby on *Thor*. Chic Stone, who had inked many of the early Kirby *Journey Into Mystery* Thor stories, also embellishes many Pollard and Kupperberg pages in this volume. It was great to have someone involved in those early classic comics help create new ones.

After the first three Pollard-drawn Thor-tales collected here, Gil Kane, another comics legend, lays out *Thor* #318. While Gil did pencil and ink the cover, the interior pages were finished by Pablo Marcos—whose credit was somehow left off the original comic (Sorry, Pablo!). The story featured the famous stone statues of Easter Island, but I must confess, I didn't realize they were actually Lithodia Rexians, a silicon-based extraterrestrial race from the planet Lithodia Rex (of course!) They invade planets by placing sleeper agents until the time of the invasion. One such group was placed on Easter Island. Who knew? Well, if I remembered Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's story from *Tales to Astonish* #5, "I Was Trapped by the Things on Easter Island," I would've known.

Following "A Kingdom Lost," is a two-page special feature titled "Gods and Goddesses of Asgard." It's essentially pin-ups of Heimdall, Hermod, Fandral, Volstagg, and Hogun. So, can you tell me which one is a goddess? Let's assume this was actually two pages from a longer special feature that actually did include Asgardian goddesses, shall we? Either that or ask Cory for another No-Prize!

Then there was the Zaniac. Keith Pollard returned to illustrate this issue, written by Doug Moench, which brought Dr. Don Blake to Chicago, just a hammer's throw away from New York City. Again, I'm reminded of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, which has had unbelievable success plucking somewhat obscure characters from Marvel comics and turning them into media superstars. For example, Groot. I'm certain it's simply a matter of time before Zaniac becomes world famous. Hey, I should know, in the penultimate episode of that *Loki* TV series we got to see the wreckage of the Thanos Copter—something that first appeared in *Spidey Super Stories* #38 (imagine the yellow helicopter that appears in this very volume on page 117 with "THANOS" written on its side in giant block letters) in a story credited to someone named Jim Salicrup. And speaking of credit, while Zaniac is entirely the creation of Doug Moench, writer, and Keith Pollard, artist, I did design the cool Zaniac logo on the cover.

Thor #320 kicks off a three-part tale, starting with "Blake's Menagerie." I edited the first two parts before leaving, and Mark Gruenwald came on as editor with the concluding chapter, "The Wrath and the Power!" Interestingly, Doug finally got to take Thor to Asgard. Keith Pollard also bid adieu to *Thor* after completing the first chapter of the Menagerie Trilogy, and Alan Kupperberg came on as the new penciler. This story was a lot of fun, and I wouldn't mind seeing these characters again.

The cover for *Thor* #323 is penciled by the talented Ed Hannigan, who designed many a cover for me over the years, and is clearly an homage to Jack Kirby. Fittingly it's inked by long-time *Thor* embellisher Vince Coletta. "…Comes a Dark Stranger!" is an untold tale of Thor's younger days, set in Asgard, written by Steven Grant, and illustrated by Greg LaRocque and Ricardo Villamonte.

Doug Moench and Alan Kupperberg return and bring Thor back to Earth rather forcibly with the help of the villainous Graviton. Thor's back in NYC and at Avengers Mansion, where we catch up a little on *Avengers*' continuity courtesy of the Wasp. But while this story is set firmly on good ol' terra firma, the classic back-up feature, Tales of Asgard, makes its dramatic return.

Thor #325 sports another spectacular cover by Ed Hannigan, this one inked by Al Milgrom. Mephisto, who appeared in this volume's first tale, is back again, in "A Deal with Darkoth." Interior artists Alan Kupperberg and Jim Mooney had their work cut out for them. In general, *The Mighty Thor* was a comic that had seen Jack Kirby, who was incredibly passionate about mythological beings throughout his incredible career, create such stunning work depicting not only the Gods (and Goddesses) of Asgard, but also visualizing the High Evolutionary, Him, Ego the Living Planet and so much more. Talk about a hard act to follow! Then throw into the mix Mephisto, a character created by Stan Lee and John Buscema in *The Silver Surfer* #3, when Big John was, in my opinion, at the peak of his artistic career. This was no easy comic to draw, and these gentlemen did a fine job, especially the very dramatic first page.

A note also about the coloring. Quite often when a comic was running behind schedule, the colorist and letterer would be given the already inked artwork to work on independently of each other. So, it's unlikely that colorist George Roussos ever saw the repeated references to "red glows," "crimson force," "blasts of crimson," etc. that Janice Chiang was lettering into balloons and captions while he was coloring, which would explain the lack of red glows, crimson force, blasts of crimson, etc. Unlike today, when proofs of every comics page are sent from the printer for editors to review before the comics are printed, back then, the only color proofs editors saw were of the covers. Chances are that in order to get *Thor* #325 printed and shipped on time, the lettered artwork and coloring were sent to the printer as soon as they were completed.

Thor #326 has yet another great Ed Hannigan cover, this one inked by Brent Anderson. This issue may be Doug Moench's second-to-last one, but Gruenwald's influence (I assume, forgive me if I'm mistaken, Doug) is apparent as it involves reviving a super champion from another country, perhaps even setting the stage for *Contest of Champions*. Doug, despite possibly feeling restricted to keeping Thor on Earth, did a wonderful job on this run of *Thor* comics. Unlike Dr. Donald Blake, who found a hammer with the inscription "Whosoever holds this hammer, if he is worthy, shall possess the power of… Thor," Doug Moench, or Keith Pollard, or even I, didn't have to prove ourselves worthy to contribute to the *Thor* mythos by lifting a hammer, or a cosmic screwdriver, or a purple crayon or whatever. You get to decide whether we were worthy or not when you read the stories collected within this wondrous tome.

And while you ponder our collective artistic merit, there's a real treat in store for you. Editor Cory Sedlmeier—he who refuses to release his grasp on those Marvel No-Prizes—chose a fitting tale to finish up this volume. Following the exceptional painted cover by the great Joe Jusko (another artist who greatly respected and was inspired by John Buscema) that was featured on *Bizarre Adventures* #32, is another Alan Zelenetz tale of the God of Thunder, this one uniquely illustrated in black and white by the exceptionally talented John Bolton.

So, there you have it. I now feel like Heimdall, standing before you as you begin your journey to Asgard, then Midgard, and back to Asgard. I hope you enjoy it.

Thanks,

2021

Jim Salicrup, believe it or not, is still editing comics that feature ancient gods—and new ones too. At Papercutz, the kids' graphic novel publisher, where he's editor-in-chief, recently published Lola's Super Club *and* The Mythics. *Quetzalcoatl, the "feathered serpent" who appears in "A Time to Die!" also appears in different forms in both of these Papercutz titles. Could it be an unofficial Marvel/Papercutz crossover?*

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THE MIGHTY

THOR™

PLUS! FOR THE FIRST TIME! A MAP OF ASGARD!

HALL/RUBINSTEIN

IN THE CLUTCHES OF THE... GOD-EATER!

Stan Lee PRESENTS:

PROLOG

Dawn of the Gods!

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE **VOID.** AS TIME PASSED, MATTER GREW WITHIN THE VOID, AND THE MATTER FORMED STARS, AND THE STARS FORMED PLANETS.

BEHOLD ONE SUCH PLANET, NOT LONG AFTER IT LEFT THE WOMB OF ITS SUN... A PLANET THAT WOULD ONE DAY BE NAMED **EARTH.**

A VERY SPECIAL PLANET WAS EARTH, POSSESSING A RICH, FERTILE **BIOSPHERE** SEETHING WITH THE POTENTIAL FOR LIFE.

AS THE OCEANS COOLED, AND CRAGGY ROCK THRUST ABOVE THE ROUGH SEAS, THE AIR ABOVE THE EARTH CRACKLED WITH POWER AND LIFE-ENERGY...

...UNTIL THE ENERGY ITSELF BECAME AWARE OF ITS OWN AWESOME POTENCY.

THUS CAME TO BE THE **DEMIURGE,** THE SENTIENT LIFE-FORCE OF EARTH'S BIOSPHERE.

AS IT PASSED ACROSS THE CATACLYSMIC FACE OF THE WORLD, THE DEMIURGE ALIGNED THE EVOLVING PLANET WITH THE CELESTIAL AXIS...

...AND THEN, IN A BURST OF PROCREATION, SHOWERED THE EARTH WITH SPARKS OF ITS OWN LIFE...

SEEDING THE PRIMEVAL MUD...

VITALIZING THE INCHOATE SOIL...

...ENGENDERING THE FIRST FORMS OF ETHEREAL LIFE WHICH SPRANG FULL-GROWN FROM THE GROUND--

--BEINGS WHO WOULD BE CALLED ELDER GODS...

BEINGS LIKE CHTHON...

GAEA...

SET...

...AND INNUMERABLE OTHERS.

THE ELDER GODS PROLIFERATED, SPREADING ACROSS THE EARTH UNTIL NO CORNER OF THE GLOBE WAS WITHOUT THEIR KIND.

AS TIME PASSED, THE EARTH WAS OVERRUN WITH ETHEREAL LIFE, AND THE ELDER GODS DEGENERATED INTO LIFE-DESTROYING **DEMONS**, CONSTANTLY AT WAR WITH ONE ANOTHER IN A STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY AND POWER...

...ALL EXCEPT **GAEA**, WHO CARED WITH MOTHERLY TENDERNESS FOR THE NEW FORM OF LIFE TEEMING NOW IN EARTH'S OCEANS...

GAEA FEARED THAT HER SAVAGE BRETHREN WOULD, IN THEIR ENDLESS WARFARE, DESTROY ALL CHANCE FOR THIS NEW LIFE TO GROW.

SHE MEDITATED UPON HOW SHE MIGHT BRING GOOD TO THE WORLD SHE LOVED...

... AND IN HER YEARNING, SUMMONED THE **DEMIURGE** ITSELF TO CONCEIVE IN HER A FORCE FOR GOOD.

THEN SHE WITHDREW INTO THE COOL WOMB OF THE EARTH, PATIENCE AND WEARINESS HER SOLE COMPANIONS...

...UNTIL...

...**ATUM** WAS BORN!

ATUM, FIRST OF THE NEW GENERATION OF GODS, WHOSE POWER WAS THE AWESOME ENERGY OF THE BLAZING SUN!

WITH THAT IRRESISTIBLE POWER, ATUM SLEW THE HORDES OF DEMON GODS, AND ABSORBED THEIR FORMS AND ENERGIES...

...UNTIL HIS OWN DIVINE FORM TOOK ON THE MISSHAPEN UGLINESS OF THOSE HE CONSUMED--THUS ATUM BECAME DEMOGORGE, THE GOD-EATER!

4

ONLY A HANDFUL OF ELDER GODS SURVIVED THE GREAT PURGE.

MOTHER GAEA ALONE WAS ALLOWED TO REMAIN.

OTHERS, LIKE CHTHON, MANAGED TO ESCAPE. INSCRIBING AN INDESTRUCTIBLE PARCHMENT TO REMAIN HIS TOUCHSTONE WITH EARTH--

--CHTHON OPENED A RIFT INTO A NETHER-DIMENSION, MOMENTS BEFORE DEMOGORGE CAME TO SLAY HIM.

HIS TASK AT LAST COMPLETE, **DEMOGORGE** ROSE UP INTO THE SKIES...

...AND CAST THE FORMS AND ENERGY FROM HIS BODY, SEEDING THE HEAVENS WITH GODSTUFF.

ONCE AGAIN, HE TRANSFORMED TO **ATUM**, FIRST AMONG THE GODS, AND MERGED WITH THE SUN...

EONS PASSED, AND EARTH'S HIGHEST PHYSICAL LIFE FORM -- **MAN**--CAME INTO BEING.

TOUCHED WITH THE SPIRIT OF DIVINITY ITSELF, MAN BEHELD THE WONDERS OF THE SKY WITH AWE AND MYSTERY...

HIS NASCENT CONSCIOUSNESS TAPPED THE GODSTUFF BEQUEATHED THE WORLD BY ATUM AND BEHOLD, NEW GODS WERE BORN IN MAN'S IMAGE...

AND THUS CAME TO BE ALL THE GODS OF EARTHLY LEGEND--GREAT PANTHEONS OF DIVERSE DIVINITY, GIVEN SUBSTANCE BY THE DEMIURGE, GIVEN FORM BY THE MIND OF MAN...

OVER THE MILLENNIA, EACH PANTHEON OF GODS FORGED THEMSELVES A HOME IN THE TWILIGHT DIMENSIONS TANGENT TO EARTH. THIS IS ONE SUCH WORLD...

ASGARD!

HOME OF THE NORSE GODS.

A REALM OF GRANDEUR AND MAJESTY, OF GREAT AND NOBLE DEEDS, A REALM OF SOMETIME JOY...

...AND SOMETIME SORROW.

HEAR YE, MY PEOPLE! WE JOIN TOGETHER THIS DAY TO HONOR THE PASS-ING OF A GODDESS!

ALL-FATHER ODIN SPEAKS...

THE SQUARE DOTH TEEM WITH GODS AND GODDESSES, AND ALL MOURN THE DEATH OF OUR DEAR DAUGHTER *NANNA*...

...WHO SACRIFICED HER LIFE THAT SHE MIGHT SAVE HER BELOVED *BALDER* FROM THE CLUTCHES OF THE WICKED QUEEN OF THE NORNS.*

*THOR #306.

OH, THOR!

WEEP NOT FOR NANNA, SWEET *SIF*, FOR SHE SLEEPS NOW BEYOND THE GRASP OF SORROW.

'TIS BALDER WHO MERITS OUR CONCERN... FOR GRIEF HAS PLANTED ITSELF FIRMLY IN HIS HEART, THOUGH GRACIOUSLY, HE SHOWS IT NOT AT THIS SOLEMN MOMENT.

'TIS SEEMLY THOU APPEAR DRY-EYED BEFORE THE CROWD, DEAR ODIN, BUT I, THY WIFE *FRIGGA*, MAY YET SHED QUIET TEARS FOR BOTH OF US.

A FOOL, THIS NANNA, TO SACRIFICE HERSELF FOR LOVE! AND YET I WISH MY OWN WRETCH OF A WIFE *SIGYN* MIGHT TAKE HER LEAD AND FREE *LOKI* FROM HATED BONDS OF MATRIMONY!

THE SKY GROWS DARK WITH THOUSANDS OF BLACK WINGS AS THE **RAVENS OF MOURNING** ARE UNLOOSED AT ODIN'S WORD.

THOUGH RARE BE THE UNTIMELY DEATH OF ONE DIVINE, HARK NOW AND ATTEND, MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS. FOR 'TIS DESTINED THAT EACH OF US MEET OUR END AT THE TWILIGHT OF THE AGE!

A FUNERAL MARCH IS SOUNDED ON HORN AND DRUM...

...AND THE PROCESSION BEGINS...

...AS A SOMBER CHORUS INTONES THE WORDS OF A MOURNFUL DIRGE...

"HOW OLD IS SORROW? DO YOU KNOW IF SADNESS AND THE MOON ARE OF ONE AGE?

"...DID BOTH LOOK ON AS THIS WORLD RAGED AND PRESSED ITSELF TO BIRTH?"

ALL-HEARING **HEIMDALL**, STAUNCH GUARDIAN OF ASGARD, LISTENS TO THE PLAINTIVE LAMENTATION FROM HIS OUTPOST ON THE RAINBOW BRIDGE, BIFROST...

THOUGH I WOULD DROP TO MY KNEES IN HOMAGE TO A GODDESS, YET MUST I RETAIN ALL SHOW OF GRIEF WITHIN MY HEART, FOR THE SENTINEL OF ASGARD DARES NOT RELAX HIS GUARD EVEN FOR THE MOMENT OF ONE SIGH.

THE PROCESSION WINDS ITS WAY TO THE BANKS OF THE RIVER GOPUL, THE RAGING TORRENT, AND AT THE RIVER'S SIDE...

ODIN COMMANDS THE ROYAL BARGE BE LAUNCHED!

WITH THE STRENGTH OF TEN GODS, A CAPTIVE STORM GIANT PULLS THE MIGHTY LONGSHIP DOWN ITS WOODEN ROLLERS INTO THE ICY STREAM.

SPLASH

THE SCENT OF FLORAL WREATHS BE BITTERSWEET INDEED. IS IT NOT SO, MY SON, THOR? NOW FAREWELL, NANNA, MAY YOUR SPIRIT KNOW ITS TRUE REWARD!

MY LOVE, THIS GOLDEN BRACELET WAS TO BE A WEDDING GIFT TO A BRIDE MOST BEAUTIFUL...

...NOW IT GRACES BUT THY LIFELESS FORM. OH, NANNA--!

NOW, LIGHTNING AND WIND, COME HALLOW THIS MOMENT! THUS COMMANDS THE THUNDER GOD BY HIS MIGHTY HAMMER MJOLNIR!

DRAWN TO EARTH BY THOR'S HAMMER, LIGHTNING STRIKES, AND NANNA'S PYRE BURSTS INTO FLAMES.

THE WINDS CATCH THE SAIL, AND THE BARGE BEGINS ITS SLOW JOURNEY DOWNSTREAM.

THE FOUR ELEMENTS MINGLE--FIRE, WATER, WIND, AND THE EARTHEN ASH OF CREMATION.

THEN, SUDDENLY, AS TWO WRAITH-LIKE VALKYRIES GALLOP SOUNDLESSLY ACROSS THE AIR ON GHOSTLY STEEDS...

...THE SPIRIT-FORM OF NANNA RISES FROM THE GLOWING FLAMES...

...THEN SPARKS OFF, DANCING FREE!

COME, NOBLE SPIRIT--

--TO VALHALLA'S HALL OF NOBLE WOMEN!

THERE YOU SHALL REPOSE IN GRACIOUS MAJESTY AND TRANQUIL AFTER-LIFE AS BEFITS ONE WHOSE DEATH WAS OF SUB-LIME DIGNITY.

THUS MY VALKYRIES DELIVER HER TO HER TRUE REWARD

THIS STONE SET ON RAGING GOPUL'S SHORE SHALL SERVE AS MONUMENT TO NANNA'S MEMORY.

HOLD, THOR--WHERE WAS *HELA*, GODDESS OF DEATH, THIS TEARFUL NOON?

SINCE OUR RACE BEGAN, SHE HATH NOT MISSED A CEREMONY SUCH AS THIS! HOW DARE SHE NOT ATTEND? I MUST KNOW THIS VERY MOMENT WHAT HATH KEPT HER!

HADES, REALM OF PLUTO, OLYMPIAN GOD OF THE DEAD.

WHILE NANNA'S SPIRIT IS DELIVERED TO AFTERLIFE IN VALHALLA, HERE IN THE ANCIENT GREEK NETHERWORLD, AN INFERNAL ASSEMBLY OF DEATH-GODS HAS GATHERED. IT IS A CONVOCATION OF EVIL INTENT IN AN ARID WASTELAND THAT KNOWS NEITHER SUN NOR STARS, ONLY AN ALL-PERVASIVE DARKNESS OF SUBSTANCE AND SPIRIT.

FROM WITHIN A CIRCLE OF JAGGED MEGALITHS THAT HAVE RECENTLY BEEN CARVED OUT OF GREY HELLSTONE FOR THIS UNIQUE OCCASION, FIENDISH VOICES ARE CONTENDING IN SHRILL DEBATE...

IT IS HERE THAT ODIN MIGHT FIND **HELA**, GODDESS OF ASGARD'S **OWN** LAND OF THE DEAD, FOR IT IS SHE WHO IS ARGUING NOW IN DESPERATE TONES...

NO, **PLUTO!** THIS IS FAR FROM A WISE COURSE OF ACTION! ONLY RECENTLY DID I ENDEAVOR TO BROADEN THE REALM OF NIFFLEHEIM. IT WAS A GRIEVOUS ERROR, AND I MET WITH MOST DISMAL FAILURE FOR ALL MY PAINS.

BAH! YOU SPEAK LIKE A TREMBLING COWARD, HELA!

A TIME TO DIE!

ALAN ZELENETZ — SCRIPTER / CO-PLOTTER
BOB HALL — PENCILER
RICK BRYANT / JOE RUBINSTEIN / ANDY MUSHYNSKY / AL GORDON / KEVIN DZUBAN — INKERS
RICK PARKER — LETTERER
GEORGE ROUSSOS — COLORIST
MARK GRUENWALD — EDITOR / CO-PLOTTER
JIM SHOOTER — EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

BUT WHAT MORE ARE WE TO EXPECT FROM A WORRISOME *WOMAN* WHO FRETS OVER A FUNERAL SHE HAS FOREGONE WHILE MATTERS OF SUCH URGENCY LIE BEFORE US?!

NOT SO, PLUTO! 'TIS PRUDENCE, NOT FEAR THAT MOVES ME--

NAY, LISTEN WELL, PLUTO OF HADES! 'TIS HELA'S OWN EXPERIENCE AND NOT HER WOMANLY ASPECT THAT PROMPTS HER DECISION.

FOR I, *ERESHKIGAL*, UNDERWORLD GODDESS OF BABYLONIA, AM WOMAN...

...YET I VOTE TO EXPAND AND MERGE OUR SEPARATE REALMS...

... AS YOU AND *MEPHISTO* HAVE PROPOSED! FOR THREE TIMES A THOUSAND YEARS NOW MY KINGDOM HAS BEEN BARE OF NEW SOULS, SINCE NONE OF US MAY LONG LAY CLAIM TO THE SPIRIT OF ANY PERSON WHO DID NOT, IN THEIR LIFETIME, BELIEVE IN US!

SETH OF HELIOPOLIS, TOO, HAS KNOWN THE FRUSTRATION OF MILLENNIA. MY JUDGMENT HALL OF THE DEAD, WHICH I USURPED FROM MY HATED BROTHER-GOD OSIRIS, IS DUSTY AND DESERTED, A FAR CRY FROM THOSE YEARS OF WORSHIP IN THE PYRAMIDS!

THOUGH WE-- AND OUR FELLOW DEATH-GODS WHO HAVE NOT MERITED INVITATION THIS DAY-- HAVE EVER BEEN ANTAGONISTS, CONTENDING FOR POSSESSION OF DEAD SOULS...

--UNLESS WE NOW CALL TRUCE, CONSOLIDATE INTO ONE MUTUAL KINGDOM, AND ACTIVELY SEEK TO REGAIN MANKIND'S DWINDLING BELIEF, WE WILL PASS BEYOND OBSCURITY INTO ETERNAL OBLIVION! *YAMA* OF THE ORIENT VOTES 'AYE!'

AS DO I!

THEN, WITH THE FINAL VOTE CAST BY *AHPUCH* OF THE MAYANS, THE TALLY IS SIX IN FAVOR, ONE OPPOSED!

HELA, WILL YOU JOIN WITH THE MAJORITY TO COALESCE OUR REALMS AND POWERS? FORGED IN UNITY, OUR COMBINED NETHERWORLD MIGHT ONCE AGAIN SWARM WITH NEW SOULS OF THE DAMNED!

MEPHISTO, OF LATE I HAD GROWN CONTENT WITH THE QUIET AND PEACE OF MY KINGDOM OF NIFFLEHEIM. YET, THOUGH I REGRET THIS COUNCIL'S INAUSPICIOUS DECISION, I SHALL ABIDE BY IT. WE TAMPER DANGEROUSLY WITH TIME'S CYCLE AND THE MYSTERIES OF FATE, BUT, AS IS MY BOND, HELA YIELDS!

THEN LET US BEGIN.

SEVEN GODS OF DEATH RISE FROM HELLISH THRONES AND MOVE SILENTLY TO A BLACK PIT AT THE CENTER OF THIS INFERNAL CHAMBER.

THE AIR GROWS RANK AS CARRION, CHARGED WITH THE PALPABLE WICKEDNESS OF THOSE FORMER RIVALS WHO NOW CLASP HANDS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ETERNITY...

...AS MEPHISTO INTONES...

IN THE NAME OF DEATH ITSELF FROM WHOM OUR POWERS DERIVE, LET A PERMANENT **NEXUS** BE MADE BETWEEN **ALL THE MYRIAD HELLS** AND LOWER REGIONS OF THE COSMOS!

AND AS THEIR HANDS JOIN, THEIR DARK REALMS ARE LINKED IN PERMANENT UNION!

FIRE ERUPTS FROM THE EYES OF THE DEATH GODS, IGNITING THEIR VERY GAZE INTO SULFUROUS FLAMES THAT BLAZE UPWARDS AS THE DARK GODS SPIN IN DIZZYING ORBIT AGAINST SPACE AND TIME...

... AND THEN--PANDEMONIUM REIGNS, AS THE SEVEN NETHER-WORLDS SHIFT THEIR DIMENSIONAL BOUNDARIES INTO ALIGNMENT. TREMORS ROCK THE COSMIC AXIS ITSELF!

KRA BOOM

WE-WE HAVE SUCCEEDED!

BUT SETH HAS SPOKEN TOO SOON OF SUCCESS, FOR AS THE CLOUDS OF FOUL BRIMSTONE DISSOLVE, THEY REVEAL NOT ONLY A BROAD EXPANSE OF ENDLESS HELL, BUT A STAGGERING BEING OF UNIMAGINABLE HORROR...

DEMOGORGE

THE GOD-EATER!

WHAT MISSHAPEN MONSTROSITY IS THIS?!

I WAS BORN *ATUM*, FIRST AMONG GODS. BUT IN THIS FORM I AM... ***DEMOGORGE!*** MY PURPOSE IS TO DESTROY YOUR DEGENERATE FORMS, RELEASE YOUR GODLY ENERGIES...!

BEGONE, DEMON-SPAWN! WE DID NOT SUMMON YOU!

SHRRAAK!

NO--YOU HAVE *UNLEASHED* ME!

SHOOK!

AK

AK

SETH'S BRAZEN ATTACK SWIFTLY TURNS TO UTTER DEFEAT--

SHLUK!

--AS THE OUTSTRETCHED ARM OF THE GROTESQUE GOD-EATER ASSAULTS HIM WITH THE SCORCHING ENERGY OF A THOUSAND SUNS...

...THEN SWALLOWS THE POWERFUL GOD OF EGYPT THROUGH A MOIST, PULSING ORIFICE IN ITS LEATHERY PALM.

THE OTHERS WATCH IN HORROR AS SETH'S DISINTEGRATING FORM COURSES THROUGH THE GOD-EATER'S VEINS! THERE WAS NO CONTEST!

I HAD NOT ANTICIPATED THIS!

I WARNED THAT NO GOOD WOULD COME OUT OF OUR CONJURING!

NOW QUICKLY--IF WE ARE TO LIVE, WE MUST JOIN OUR DARK-WORLD POWERS AND STRIKE! THE MONSTROSITY TURNS TO ASSAIL US!

BUT HELA'S COUNSEL COMES TOO LATE...

...FOR AS THE DESPERATE DEATH-GODS ATTACK, THEIR HELLFIRE IS NULLIFIED BY THE ALL-CONSUMING POWER OF THE GOD-HUNGRY DEMOGORGE!

IT HAS BEEN UNTOLD **EONS** SINCE HE FULFILLED HIS PURPOSE TO DESTROY. HE LIFTS BOTH ARMS...

... AND--WITH THE IRRESISTIBLE FORCE OF A COSMIC MAELSTROM--HE DRAWS **PLUTO** AND **YAMA** WHIRLING TO HIM, EVEN AS THEY KICK AND FLAIL IN PAIN AND FEAR...

IF ONE THING IS CLEAR, IT IS THAT THE ARROGANT DEATH GODS THEMSELVES DREAD TO DIE!

THE DEMON'S POWER IS IN HIS ARMS, MEPHISTO!

WE MUST DISMEMBER THOSE DEADLY LIMBS!

NO, AHPUCH! HIS STRENGTH IS GREATER THAN A LEGION OF GODS!

AND INCREASES WITH EACH BEING I DEVOUR!

AIEEE!

THE DEMOGORGE LEANS FORWARD IN BLOODTHIRSTY RAGE, AND A STRANGE PLEA FOR MERCY TREMBLES ON THE LIPS OF DEATH GODS UNACCUSTOMED TO BEGGING FOR THEIR LIVES...

NOOOO

...THE PLEA STRETCHES INTO A LONG SHRIEK OF AGONY, FOR THE GOD-EATER GRANTS NO QUARTER AS TWO MORE GODS ARE METABOLIZED INTO ESSENTIAL GODSTUFF!

SUDDENLY, A RAVEN BLACK AS THE NIGHT OF THE NETHERWORLD WINGS PAST...

...AND WITNESSES THE DESPERATE FLIGHT OF ERESHKIGAL AND HELA...

IT IS THE RAVEN **HUGIN**, ALL-FATHER ODIN'S MESSENGER, FLYING AT THE SPEED OF THOUGHT ACROSS THE UNIVERSE IN SEARCH OF HELA.

NOW THAT THE BIRD HAS DISCOVERED THE GODDESS HERE IN THIS STRANGE NEW HELL THAT BOTH IS AND IS NOT NIFFLEHEIM...

...THE MESSAGE IS CARRIED INSTANTANEOUSLY TO ASGARD.

IT IS NOT WELL RECEIVED...

A GOD-EATER--?

EVEN THE ALL-FATHER KNEW NOT OF THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH A BEING! YET HUGIN WARNS OF A DIRE THREAT TO **ALL** THE GODS!

THE SKY-FATHER MAKES HIS WAY WITH GRIM, DETERMINED HASTE DOWN A PRIVATE PATH TO THE FOOT OF THE WORLD-TREE YGGDRASIL...

...THE GIANT TREE OF LIFE THAT MARKS THE CELESTIAL AXIS.

HERE HE LIFTS **GUNGNIR**, THE GLEAMING SPEAR OF HEAVEN...

... AND MAJESTICALLY SEVERS A LEAFY BRANCH FROM THE MIGHTY TRUNK...

...THEN CASTS IT WITH SOLEMN RITUAL INTO THE LIMPID WATERS OF THE POOL BELOW.

THE WATERS CLOUD... AND THEN, SHIMMERING ON THE TRANQUIL SURFACE OF THE POOL, VISAGES OF OTHER SKY-FATHERS APPEAR...

THESE ARE THE GODHEADS OF THE OTHER GREAT PANTHEONS OF EARTH. ONLY IN TIMES OF COSMIC CALAMITY DO THEY HOLD COURT. THIS IS ONE SUCH TIME...

OUR GODS OF DEATH HAVE UNLEASHED THE DESTROYER OF ALL GODS! WE MUST EACH SEND OUR GREATEST CHAMPION TO THE *NEXUS* OF THE NETHERWORLDS TO VANQUISH IT. FOR IF IT BREACHES OUR HOME DIMENSIONS, IT WILL CONSUME US ALL AND END OUR RULES FOR ETERNITY!

ODIN'S CHARGE IS ACCEPTED, AND THE IMAGES IN THE WATER FADE. SOON...

FATHER! YOUR RAVENS BECKONED ME. WHAT--

MY SON, THE COMMUNITY OF GODS IS THREATENED BY A MENACE THAT DWARFS RAGNAROK -- THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS -- ITSELF! 'TIS A BEING WHO FEEDS 'PON OUR VERY ESSENCES!

YOU, ASGARD'S MIGHTIEST WARRIOR, MUST JOIN WITH THE OTHER PANTHEONS' MIGHTIEST, AND SAVE US ALL FROM OBLIVION.

VERY WELL, MY LIEGE!

FAREWELL!

IF THOU FAIL, ASGARD WILL KNOW MORE SORROW THAN TEN THOUSAND TIMES THIS SAD DAY'S FUNERAL!

SOON, SEVEN OF THE GREATEST CHAMPIONS OF EARTH'S PANTHEONS APPEAR AT THE NEXUS TO MEET THE GREATEST CHALLENGE ANY OF THEM HAS YET KNOWN...

...FOR AS ODIN'S WARNING DID PORTEND--FAILURE HERE MEANS THE UTTER EXTINCTION OF THE MYRIAD MYTH-REALMS AND OF ALL THE DIVINE HOSTS THAT DWELL THEREIN.'

HERE IS TAWA, SUN-CHAMPION OF THE PUEBLO PEOPLES, ASTRIDE A BEAM OF SOLID LIGHT!

QUETZALCOATL, "FEATHERED SERPENT" OF THE AZTECS, HIS SOLAR DISK THRUST FORTH DEFIANTLY!

SHANGO OF AFRICA'S YORUBA TRIBE ROLLS FORWARD ON A BLACK THUNDERCLOUD!

MIGHTY THOR OF NORSE ASGARD LEADS WITH THE POWER OF HIS HAMMER MJOLNIR!

APOLLO OF OLYMPUS, A CHARIOT OF SUNFIRE!

INDRA, THUNDER-MASTER OF THE HINDUS, DRIVES A WAR-CHARIOT OF GOLD!

WHILE HORUS, EGYPT'S FALCON-GOD, FLIES WITH THE MYSTIC STAFF OF LIFE, THE ANKH, HELD TIGHTLY IN HIS GRASP!

SO SOLEMN IS THE MOMENT THAT NO BATTLE CRY IS RAISED. EACH GOD THINKS ONLY OF THE INCREDIBLE CONSEQUENCES SHOULD THEY MEET DEFEAT.

THE NEXUS OF THE NETHERWORLDS! IN ALL MY JOURNEYS I HAVE NEVER SEEN SO BROAD AN EXPANSE OF UTTER DARKNESS!

AYE, BLACK AS THE LION'S MOUTH, GOLDHAIR! STILL, AMONG THESE BLEAK CRAGS AND FOUL PITS I WILL PLANT MY *OFO ROD*...

MAY IT GRANT LONG LIFE TO ALL TRUE WARRIORS HERE ASSEMBLED!

IT WITHERS! THIS IS AN EVIL OMEN!

MY STAFF MUST MAKE CONTACT WITH ALÉ, THE EARTH GODDESS ABOVE, IF WE ARE TO HAVE ITS PROTECTION!

FOREGO YOUR CEREMONY, AFRICAN! COME, THE MONSTER DEMOGORGE LURKS SOMEWHERE IN THESE DISMAL SHADOWS!

AND, NEARBY...

STRIVE AGAINST HIM! OH! I CAN NO LONGER HOLD!

DESPITE HELA'S GALLANT EFFORTS, ERESHKIGAL AT LAST SUCCUMBS...

...AND HELA KNOWS THAT HER OWN DEMISE WILL BE SOON UPON HER!

YET, SUDDENLY, THE DEMOGORGE HALTS...

I SENSE THE PRESENCE OF MORE GODS WITHIN THESE BOUNDS!

...AND HELA USES THE MOMENT'S DISTRACTION TO FLEE-- THOUGH FEAR FOR HER OWN LIFE IS NOT HER ONLY MOTIVE...

IF THERE ARE MORE GODS APPROACHING, I MUST WARN THEM!

PRINCE THOR, IS IT YOU?! TURN, RUN, ALL OF YOU! YOU CANNOT KNOW WHAT UNASSAILABLE HORROR PURSUES!

THE MONSTROUS DEMOGORGE, HUNTING GODS FOR SUSTENANCE!

I AM WEARY, PRINCE, AS THOUGH, ALONE, I HAD FOUGHT AN ARMY OF STORM GIANTS!

THERE IS SOLACE IN THOR'S EMBRACE...

BUT, IT IS SHORT-LIVED!

HELA!

AH, SO THERE ARE MORE OF YOU IN THIS DESOLATE CLIME! GOOD!

MURDEROUS BEAST!

THOU SHALT NOW FEEL THE WRATH OF *THOR!*

THERE IS A SUDDEN HUSH AS THE POISED GODS WONDER IF THE ASGARDIAN'S WEAPON WILL DRAW FIRST BLOOD...

...THE ANSWER IS RESOUNDINGLY, NO!

NOW I WILL CONSUME!

LET OUR DEFENSE BE THUS-- THOSE OF THEE POSSESSED OF THE SUN'S COSMIC POWERS, PRESS THY ATTACK!

WE THUNDER-GODS SHALL RISE ALOFT TO GATHER THE STORMS FROM ABOVE THIS INFERNAL NEXUS!

I DID NOT KNOW THOU WERT ALSO GOD OF THUNDER, SHIVA!

NOT SHIVA, NORTHERNER-- *INDRA!* I SOUGHT TO MISLEAD YOU AS TO MY NATURE WHEN FIRST WE MET. *

*THOR #301.

AS INDRA EXPLAINS PAST DECEITS, APOLLO AND TAWA ENGAGE THE FOE...

MY ARROWS' FLAMES ARE THOSE OF THE SUN'S OWN CROWN--YET THE MONSTER STANDS!

HOLD, THEN, APOLLO! TAWA'S ARROW-HEADS POSSESS THE SUN'S *POWER*, NOT MERELY ITS FLAMES!

TAWA'S GLEAMING SHAFT EXPLODES WITH ALL THE FURY OF SOLAR FUSION, ASSAULTING THE DEMOGORGE WITH BLINDING LIGHT AND BLISTERING HEAT.! BUT...

WHAT CAN IT TAKE TO DEFEAT HIM?! HE WITHSTANDS BOTH FLAME AND POWER!

TAWA, BEWARE! THE HORROR REACHES FOR THEE!

THERE! MY *SOLAR DISK* DEFLECTS HIS GRASP!

WE CANNOT HALT FOR ONE SECOND'S BREATH, BROTHERS! IF MY *ANKH'S* FORCE DOES NOT RENDER THE BEAST HELPLESS, THEN OUR ONLY HOPE MAY BE TO OUTLAST HIM IN BATTLE TILL THE THUNDER GODS ARRIVE!

...AND YET...

BIORAAK

BIORAAK

AT FULL BLAST, THE ANKH'S FORCE COULD LEVEL A RANGE OF MOUNTAINS, SHATTER SMALL PLANETS...

IGNORANT GOD! THE LIFE-FORCE OF YOUR STAFF FEEDS THE FURNACE OF MY BEING!

YOUR LIFE SHALL FURTHER STOKE ITS FLAMES!

ARRGH

KNOW THAT HORUS FACES DEATH CONTEMPTUOUSLY, DEMON!

THOUGH HORUS SUFFERS THE SAME **FATE** AS DID THE DEATH-GODS EARLIER, THERE IS MORE DEFIANT WILL AND BOLD PASSION IN THE **RESISTANCE.**

INDEED, FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE DEMOGORGE TWINGES WITH THE SLIGHTEST SENSATION OF **PAIN.**

THIS CREATURE APPEARS BEYOND ALL RECKONING! BUT STILL I MUST GAIN TIME...

...FOR THUNDER RUMBLES IN THE THE DISTANCE, AND THE STORM GODS MAY YET SUCCEED WHERE WE HAVE NOT.

APOLLO LIFTS THEE, GOLDEN LYRE, AND SUMMONS FORTH THY SONG!

APOLLO'S MUSIC FLOATS ACROSS THE AIR TO DRAPE ITSELF ABOUT THE GOD-DESTROYER LIKE A COMELY WRAITH.

FOR THE SLIGHTEST MOMENT, THE DEMOGORGE IS LULLED...

BUT THEN...

BROOM!

IF THE POWERS OF THE SUN VANQUISH THEE NOT, VILLAINOUS DESTROYER, THE FORCES OF THE LIGHTNING STORM SHALL BLAST THEE TO THE MARROW!

ASGARDIAN, MY MUSIC IS DROWNED IN THY THUNDER'S ROAR!

THERE IS *NONE* WHO CAN DEFY ME!

QUETZALCOATL!

YOU BOAST BEFORE TASTING THE VENGEFUL SPIKE OF SHANGO'S THROWING IRON, DEMON!

THE KEEN EDGE OF THE IRON STRIKES, AND, FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS DAY, DRAWS BLOOD FROM THE DEMOGORGE.

COME, APOLLO! TOPPLE HIM WHILE HE IS STUNG!

AARR!

NO! HE TAKES TO THE AIR, TAWA!

INFLAMED BY THE UNACCUSTOMED PAIN, THE DEMOGORGE GOES BERSERK...

NOT EVEN THE ELDER GODS STRUGGLED SO MIGHTILY, HE THINKS.

HE PLUCKS APOLLO AND TAWA FROM THE AIR...

...AND THRUSTS THEM DEEP INTO HIS HIDEOUS MAW...

...THEN TURNS IN FRENZY ON THE REMAINING GODS!

HIS ROAR DROWNS EVEN THE THUNDROUS CRACK OF THE **VAGRA** LIGHTNING LANCES WHICH THE FOUR-ARMED INDRA CASTS UNFLAGGINGLY!

ENOUGH!

IT IS ENOUGH, PETTY GODS!

ENTER INTO MY BEING!

THOR! THOUGH YOU ARE THE LAST OF US TO REMAIN... YIELD NOT!

BY YMIR'S BLOOD! THIS DEMOGORGE HAS WITHSTOOD OUR COMBINED ASSAULT--! IF, THEN, HE CANNOT BE DEFEATED FROM WITHOUT, THERE IS BUT ONE LAST CHANCE--TO BATTLE HIM FROM *WITHIN!*

I SHALL NOT SUFFER THE SACRED SPIRIT OF LIFE IN EACH OF US DIVINE TO BE EXTINGUISHED!

FOR ASGARD!

FOR LIFE!

SO VOWING, THOR DIVES HEADLONG INTO THE VISCOUS FLUIDS OF THE CREATURE'S VEINS!

AND..

THIS PAIN IS HARROWING BEYOND ALL ENDURANCE!

YET ENDURE IT I MUST AND OPPOSE IT, IF THE CELESTIAL REALMS ARE TO ESCAPE OBLIVION!

HIS OUTER TRAPPINGS DISSOLVE AS HE IS SUCKED ALONG THE DEMOGORGE'S DIGESTIVE TRACT...

THIS FETID CAVITY IS THE CREATURE'S MAMMOTH ABDOMEN, AND THERE MY FELLOW GODS WRITHE UNDER TWISTING PAPILLAE THAT LEACH THEIR VERY ENERGIES!

AND NOW THEY SEEK TO STRANGLE *ME!* I MUST RESIST!

YET,.. THEY DRAIN ME... OF ALL STRENGTH...

...I FEEL SO TIRED.. NUMB...

NO!

SNAPT!

THE LAST HOPE OF THE GODS DIES WITH ME IF I FALL!

SUDDENLY, THE RAGING SEA OF DEMOGORGE'S BLOOD IS STILLED, THE ORGANS OF HIS BODY CEASE TO DIGEST...

...AND THOR IS BECKONED BY A PULSATING GLOW FROM BEHIND A FIBROUS MEMBRANE.

DESPITE THE EBBING STRENGTH OF EXHAUSTED LIMBS, THE CHAMPION OF ASGARD TEARS THROUGH THE TOUGH TISSUE... UNTIL...

I WOULD HAVE WORDS WITH YOU, GODLING!

I AM *DEMOGORGE!* MY TASK IS TO CONVERT OUTGROWN DEITIES INTO THEIR ESSENTIAL ENERGIES...

...BUT YOUR INCREDIBLE RESISTANCE AGAINST THE METABOLIC PROCESSES OF MY BEING--

--HAVE REVERSED THE RHYTHMS OF MY LIVING BODY. I CANNOT CONTAIN THE ENERGY I HAVE CONSUMED! THIS COULD NOT BE UNLESS IT IS NOT TIME FOR YOU TO DIE!

IF THIS BE SO, THE COSMIC AXIS MUST BE SET A'RIGHT AND THE NEXUS OF THE NETHERWORLDS FOREVER SEALED! THEN I MAY RELEASE YOU!

THE DEMOGORGE DRAWS UPON THE TOTAL POWER OF THE GODS HE HAS CONSUMED...

A SUCCESSION OF STAGGERING BLASTS FOLLOWS, AS THOUGH THE UNIVERSE ITSELF WERE IN CONVULSION! AND THE LINK BETWEEN THE SEVEN NETHERWORLDS IS SEVERED, RESTORING THEM TO THEIR ORIGINAL DIMENSIONAL BOUNDARIES! THE NEXUS IS NO MORE! THE COSMIC AXIS CEASES TO TREMBLE!

THEN THE GOD-EATER DISPERSES THE QUIVERING FORMS CONSUMED THIS DAY AND THE BARREN SOIL OF HADES PULSES FOR AN INSTANT WITH LIFE...

...LIFE ALL THE MORE GLORIOUS FOR ITS REBIRTH OUT OF DEATH!

YET THE MOMENT OF RENEWAL-- JOYFUL AS IT MAY BE-- PASSES WITH SOLEMNITY.

FOR THOUGH EACH GOD WOULD CELEBRATE HIS OR HER REBIRTH...

...THE FINAL WORDS OF THE DEMOGORGE ARE TOO SOBERING...

YOUR FORMS HAVE BEEN RESTORED, YOUR SEVERAL HELLS RETURNED TO THEIR BOUNDS, AND THE COSMIC AXIS AGAIN ALIGNED WITH EARTH'S SPHERE.

THUS TIME MAY NOW RESUME ITS NATURAL COURSE.

BUT KNOW THAT WHEN TIME'S PRESENT CYCLE ENDS, AS IT MUST, I SHALL BE SUMMONED RIGHTFULLY *THEN* TO FULFILL THE PURPOSE THAT THIS DAY HAS BEEN POSTPONED!

NOW, ONCE AGAIN, I BECOME *ATUM*, FIRST OF GODS, AND LEAVE YOU OF THIS GENERATION TO ENJOY THE SPIRITUAL SUSTENANCE OF MANKIND'S BELIEF..

...FOR WHATEVER BE YOUR DESTINED SPAN!

AND IN A BURST OF BRILLIANCE LIKE THE BIRTH OF A HEAVENLY STAR, ATUM, THE TRANSFORMED DEMOGORGE, IS GONE.

THEN...

SHALL WE SIMPLY PERMIT THIS ATUM TO RUIN OUR PLANS AND FORCE US INTO OBSCURITY?

NO! FOREWARNED OF THIS MONSTER, WE CAN MEET HIS THREAT--

AYE, AND RESTORE OUR REALMS' MAJESTY!

NEVER!

WE GODS OF LIFE WILL JOIN FORCES TO OPPOSE YOUR WICKED DESIGNS AGAINST MANKIND!

BUT FOR NOW MY MUSIC SHALL HEAL OUR WOUNDS AND RENEW THE VIGOR OF OUR SPIRITS...

...SO THAT WE MAY RETURN TO OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS AS HERALDS OF PRESENT VICTORY.

THERE IS NO VICTORY IN AN EMPTY HELL, RASH OLYMPIAN! WE GODS OF DEATH SHALL YET HAVE OUR WAY!

BUT THAT IS A TASK FOR ANOTHER DAY!

AND, AS THE OTHER GODS DEPART TO THEIR MYTH-REALMS, HELA APPROACHES THOR...

THOR, I DREAD THE WRATH OF ODIN!

NAY, HELA, COME, I SHALL ACCOMPANY THEE TO ASGARD.

EPILOG

ODIN'S THRONEROOM IN ASGARD...

ONLY RECENTLY,* THOR, DID I RECEIVE THE ALL-FATHER'S MERCY, AFTER I HAD SOUGHT BUT FAILED TO MAKE HIS REALM OF VALHALLA MY OWN...

*THOR #314.

HE'LL NOT FORGIVE ME TWICE! BUT TRULY *THIS* WAS NOT MY FAULT. I RECEIVED SUMMONS AND KNEW NOT WHEREFORE--

FEAR NOT, COUSIN, FOR MINE OWN EYES DID SEE THY TRUE DIGNITY AND COURAGE THIS DAY. ALL-FATHER ODIN SHALL HAVE NO CAUSE TO BE ANGERED WITH THEE.

INDEED, THOU ART PRAISEWORTHY!

NOT AS MUCH AS THEE FOR THINE UNDAUNTED BATTLE TO RESCUE US! THOU ART INDEED, THOR, THE CHAMPION!

I FORGET MYSELF... WOULD THAT I COULD KISS THEE, PRINCE, WITHOUT THE BLIGHT OF DEATH STRIKING YOUR BODY.

MY SPOKEN WORDS THUS MUST SUFFICE.

SIRE!

ONLY YESTERDAY DID ODIN BURY ONE CHILD...

... BUT TODAY, WITH WARM CHEER, HE WELCOMES BACK HIS GOD-DAUGHTER AND HIS DEAR BLOOD-SON AS WELL. BOTH I HAD FEARED TO HAVE LOST!

ONE MOMENT OF SUCH JOY AND PRIDE AS THIS IS BALM FOR A THOUSAND SORROWS...

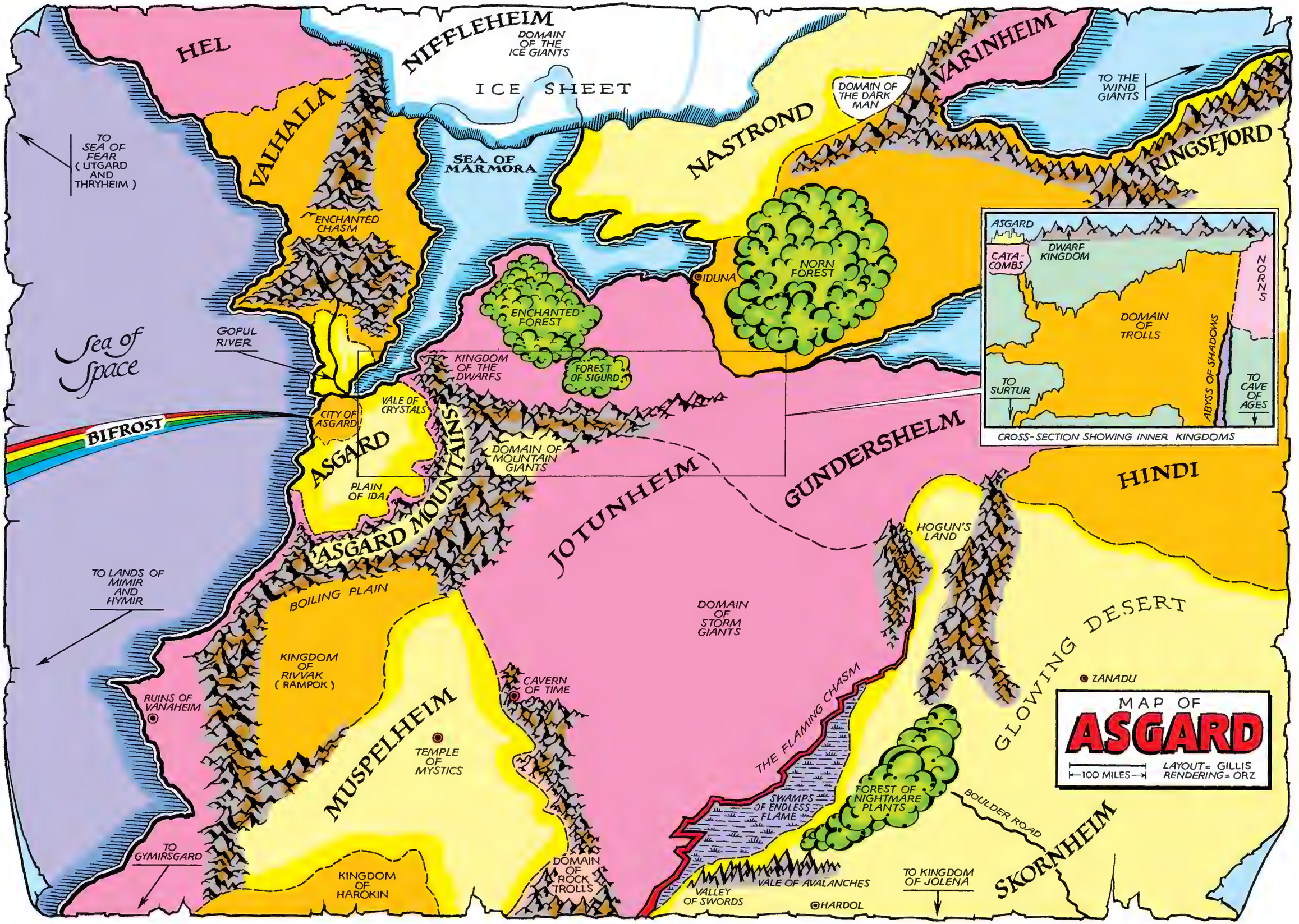
FOR THY VICTORY-- FORESTALLING THE UNTIMELY TWILIGHT OF OUR AGE-- HATH BROUGHT GREAT GOOD TO HUMANKIND AND HATH PRESERVED EARTH'S HEAVENLY DOMINIONS!

GO THEN, CHILDREN, AND-- HELA, BEFORE RETURNING TO YOUR SHADOW-REALM-- STROLL THE GLORIOUS GARDENS OF ASGARD, DRINK OF THE DIVINE MEAD, AND RENEW YOURSELF IN QUIET REPOSE.

"FOR I, THINE ALL-FATHER, BLESS YOU THIS DAY...

"... AND WELCOME THEE ONCE MORE, MY CHILDREN, TO LIFE!"

FIN


HEL
NIFFLEHEIM
DOMAIN OF THE ICE GIANTS
ICE SHEET
VARINHEIM
TO THE WIND GIANTS
RINGSEJORD
NASTROND
DOMAIN OF THE DARK MAN
VALHALLA
SEA OF MARMORA
TO SEA OF FEAR (UTGARD AND THRYHEIM)
ENCHANTED CHASM
IDUNA
NORN FOREST
ENCHANTED FOREST
FOREST OF SIGURD
KINGDOM OF THE DWARFS
GOPUL RIVER
Sea of Space
BIFROST
CITY OF ASGARD
VALE OF CRYSTALS
ASGARD
PLAIN OF IDA
DOMAIN OF MOUNTAIN GIANTS
ASGARD MOUNTAINS
JOTUNHEIM
GUNDERSHELM
HINDI
HOGUN'S LAND
TO LANDS OF MIMIR AND HYMIR
BOILING PLAIN
KINGDOM OF RIVVAK (RAMPOK)
DOMAIN OF STORM GIANTS
GLOWING DESERT
ZANADU
CAVERN OF TIME
RUINS OF VANAHEIM
MUSPELHEIM
TEMPLE OF MYSTICS
THE FLAMING CHASM
FOREST OF NIGHTMARE PLANTS
BOULDER ROAD
SWAMPS OF ENDLESS FLAME
TO GYMIRSGARD
KINGDOM OF HAROKIN
DOMAIN OF ROCK TROLLS
VALLEY OF SWORDS
VALE OF AVALANCHES
HARDOL
TO KINGDOM OF JOLENA
SKORNHEIM
ASGARD
CATA-COMBS
DWARF KINGDOM
NORNS
DOMAIN OF TROLLS
ABYSS OF SHADOWS
TO SURTUR
TO CAVE OF AGES
CROSS-SECTION SHOWING INNER KINGDOMS
MAP OF
ASGARD
100 MILES
LAYOUT = GILLIS
RENDERING = ORZ

A GAZETTEER OF ASGARD AND ENVIRONS

by Peter B. Gillis

There is no way a two-dimensional map can adequately show the peculiarities of the geography of Asgard. Before we proceed to the gazetteer proper, these peculiarities need to be addressed.

Asgard, like every known realm of godly beings, is located in another dimension than Earth's. How these dimensions were first discovered by these mythic gods who derived from Earth's spiritually-fertile biosphere has yet to be chronicled. It is known that there are portals of various natures between Earth's dimension and the godly realms. The usual means by which one traverses from Midgard (the Asgardian name for Earth) to Asgard is along the Rainbow Bridge Bifrost. Approaching Asgard via the Bridge, Asgard appears to be a big city of gleaming spires resting on a small rocky island floating in what seems to be outer space. However, once one arrives, that small island appears to be an enormous continent, peopled with giants, trolls, sorceresses, and gods. How is this possible?

The clue to this mystery lies in the means by which the Asgardians traverse the "sea of space" which borders Asgard. They do it in Viking ships. The Asgardians sail across space as if it were the surface of a watery sea, never breaking the surface tension and drifting into our dimension. This nigh-infinite surface to the sea of space bordering Asgard is undoubtedly the dimensional barrier separating the universes of Asgard and Earth.

The only standing phenomenon that penetrates the dimensional barrier is the Rainbow Bridge. Whatever transdimensional element the Bridge is composed of creates a portal through the sea of space, permitting passage between realms. Further, by standing on the Bridge, one can peer through the circular hole in space at the end of the Bridge and see Asgard. But, like looking through a keyhole in a door at a distance of a foot, there is a limit to how much you can see beyond. It is only when you go through the door (or pass through the dimensional portal at the end of the Bridge) that you can see the room (or world) beyond. Thus it is our own starry space that seems to surround the small island of Asgard, and occludes our view of the lands adjoining it.

As far as can be ascertained, the lands of Asgard are a flat continent bordered by an infinite sea of space on at least one boundary. What about the other boundaries? It is difficult to determine. What is known is that if one travels (by land or air) far enough from the known lands of Asgard, one actually crosses over into the lands of other dimensional realms. In JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY #111, for example, Balder encounters a "creature from a foreign universe" who happens to have wandered into Asgard's outer regions. In THOR #143, Balder and Sif travel to the far-off land of Ringsfjord where they encounter the Enchanters, powerful sorcerers, "whose power come from far beyond Asgard." It seems then that Asgard's other boundaries may be land-locked, and that passage into other mythic realms is possible simply by walking or riding. Perhaps all the mythic realms of the Earth-born gods are adjacent in some way. There are known tunnels between godly realms, for example, the one between Asgard and Olympus shown in THOR ANNUAL #1.

On the subjects of tunnels, the Trolls who live beneath the surface of the lands of Asgard know the locations of certain interdimensional portals other than the Rainbow Bridge. They have managed to dig themselves a tunnel into the bowels of the Earth (THOR #137-139) and into the dimension of Trogg (THOR #253). Perhaps when they reach the bottom of the Asgardian landmass, they are interdimensionally transported to other universes, a function of piercing the sea of space upon which Asgard floats.

Now, on to the Gazetteer...

ABYSS OF SHADOWS: An underground chasm that divides the *Kingdom of the Trolls* from the subterranean *Cavern of the Norns.* It is apparently bottomless. Ulik the Troll, once hurtling down the abyss, found the *Cave of Ages* which opened out onto it.

ASGARD, CITY OF: Capital city of the land of Asgard, and home of the major gods of Earthly legend. The Rainbow Bridge Bifrost leads to the city gates.

ASGARD, KINGDOM OF: The land surrounding and encompassing the city of Asgard, nestled within the*Asgard Mountains* and the *Sea of Marmora.* Except for the densely-populated city of Asgard, the kingdom is a rolling green meadow dotted with small farms.

ASGARD MOUNTAINS: The ring of high, barren mountains encircling the kingdom of Asgard. The outer fringes are inhabited by mountain giants, and the region underneath is inhabited by the Dwarfs under King Sindri.

AVALANCHES, VALLEY OF: The last obstacle that Balder once had to cross to reach the home of Hardol the Healer in the far south, to save Jane Foster's life.

BIFROST: The transdimensional Rainbow Bridge connecting Midgard (Earth) and Asgard.

BOILING PLAIN: A volcanic plain located south of the *Asgard Mountains,* on which the forces of Odin suffered their one and only defeat at the hands of Rivvak the Fearless.

BOULDER ROAD: A hellishly hot trail leading north through *Skornheim.*

CATACOMBS OF ASGARD: Ancient rooms and tunnels that honeycomb the ground beneath Asgard.

CAVES OF AGES: A cave hollowed in the deepest part of Asgard, probably as deep as Surtur is buried, in which Odin, ages ago, had imprisoned the Mangog.

CAVERN OF TIME: A cave in the mountains on the border of *Jotunheim* which contains strange transtemporal passages to other times and dimensions. Thor once emerged from the Cavern in the midst of the the Trojan War, 4,000 years ago.

CRYSTALS, GLADE OF: A pleasant valley in *Gundershelm,* in which there is a gateway to the universe of the being called the Unknown.

DARK MAN, DOMAIN OF THE: a province in distant *Nastrond* where a man embodying "fear" once dwelled.

DARK SEA: An ocean reachable by crossing the *Sea of Space.* The lands of King Mirmir and King Hymir both border on it. Also called the *Sea of Eternal Darkness.*

DWARFS, KINGDOM OF THE: This underground kingdom is located near Asgard in the *Asgard Mountains.* The Dwarfs make all of Asgard's enchanted weapons, and even fashioned Mjolnir, Thor's hammer. Though in the past, they had entered into secret alliance with the Trolls, the Dwarfs are now Asgard's allies.

ENCHANTED CHASM: A deep gorge that separates Asgard from *Valhalla* and *Hel* in the North. Filled with perilous mists, it serves as a frontier between the lands of the dead and other regions.

ENCHANTED FORREST: A large wood beyond the *Asgard Mountains,* bordering on the *Sea of Marmora.* Through it winds the path which Iduna, goddess of immortality, takes to Asgard.

ENDLESS FLAME, SWAMPS OF: An area bordering the *Flaming Chasm* on the south, which is the road to Hardol the Healer.

ETERNAL DARKNESS, SEA OF: See *Dark Sea.*

FEAR, SEA OF: Another ocean reachable by crossing the *Sea of Space,* in which are located the *Pillars of Utgard* and the *Stone Hive of Thryheim.*

FLAMING CHASM: Also known as the *Molten Chasm.* A long crack in the earth filled with flame that separates the land of *Skornheim* and the home of Hardol the Healer from the rest of the world.

GEIRRODUR, KINGDOM OF: A vast stretch of wasteland, stretching north of *Skornheim* and south of *Hindi,* in which the *Mystic Mountain* and its hidden city of *Zanadu* are situated.

GOPUL RIVER: A river just outside the *City of Asgard* which leads northward to the land of *Valhalla.*

GUNDERSHELM: A land bordering the *Kingdom of Asgard,* under which is the *Kingdom of the Trolls.*

GYMIRSGARD: A very distant land, located far to the south and west, about which little is known, save that its inhabitants are friendly to Asgard.

HARKIN, KINGDOM OF: Harokin, a warrior who bore a striking resemblance to Thor except for his brown hair, once ruled a kingdom in the far south. Once he invaded *Muspelheim* and sacked the *Temple of Mystics,* obtaining the Warlock's Eye, with which he conquered an outpost in Asgard itself. He was defeated by Thor, mortally wounded, and taken by Hela to *Valhalla.*

HEL: The land of Hela, goddess of death. It borders on *Valhalla,* and for a time Hela annexed the land of the honored dead to her own colder and gloomier realm. She has since relinquished Valhalla.

HINDI: A mysterious barren land in the east. Thor, Hogun, Fandral and Volstagg once sought out the hermit Wazir in their search for *Zanadu.*

HOGUN'S LAND: A small, verdant land separated by a mountain range from the *Glowing Desert.* It had been conquered by Mogul from the *Mystic Mountain,* but was liberated by Thor and Hogun.

HYMIR, KINGDOM OF: A land bordering on the *Dark Sea.* King Hymir was a treacherous king that Odin nevertheless wished to establish an alliance with, and so sent Thor and Loki in a diplomatic mission that nearly ended in tragedy.

ICE GIANTS, LAND OF: Originally the Ice Giants controlled all the North, from *Varinheim* to *Hel,* but Odin broke their power in the early years of the age. Since then they have ruled *Niffleheim,* but even there, the Storm Giants rampage through at will.

IDA, PLAINS OF: The vast, grassy plains that surround most of the city of Asgard. It is there that Odin brought into being all the gods of Asgard at the beginning of the age.

IDUNA, ABODE OF: The goddess of Immortality lives beyond Asgard on the southern shore of the *Sea of Marora,* between the *Enchanted Forest* and the *Norn Forest.* Every year she makes the perilous journey to Asgard to bestow the apples of immortality on the gods of Asgard.

JOLENA, KINGDOM OF: A small territory in the midst of bleak *Skornheim* ruled by Odin's one-time paramour, Jolena.

JOTUNHEIM: The Land of the Storm Giants. It occupies a great space of land, though the land is mostly waste (partly because of the giants' own depredations.) It partially lies atop the subterranean kingdom of their remote kin, the Trolls.

KARNILLA, KINGDOM OF: See *Norns, Caverns of.*

KNORDA, KINGDOM OF: See *Mountain Giants, Kingdom of.*

MARMORA, SEA OF: The Sea of Marmora has a branch that extends right up to the city walls of Asgard itself. Situated on a plateau, the Sea of Marmora's level is higher that of Asgard. It has flooded Asgard more than once. The northern reaches of the sea are regularly frozen, and Asgardians ice-fish there.

MIRMIR, KINGDOM OF: The Kingdom of Mirmir is an island beyond the Sea of Space, surrounded by the Dark Sea.

MUSPELHEIM: The Land of Fire to the south of Asgard. At the beginning of the age, it was the land where Surtur ruled. It was left nearly uninhabited when Odin subdued him and banished him to the depths.

MYSTIC MOUNTAIN: A giant stalactite hanging in a cavern below the *Glowing Desert,* it contains the city of *Zanadu.* It was once ruled by a being caled Mogul, who enslaved the people of Hogun the Grim. Upon his defeat, it became the realm of King Alibar, a former thief.

MOUNTAIN GIANTS, KINGDOM OF: The Mountain Giants hold the mountains on the outer periphery of Asgard. They are ruled by Queen Knorda, who is normal sized and quite beautiful. Since her defeat at Odin's hands, the Giants have been less of a threat, but still periodically ravage parts of Asgard.

NASTROND: A wasteland to the north and east, Nastrond was the home of King Fafnir, a sorcerer who became a dragon and once turned Nastrond into a desert. With the vanquishing of Fafnir, rain came again to Nastrond, and it is now a green and pleasant place.

NIFFLEHEIM: See *Ice Giants, Land of.*

NIGHTMARE PLANTS, FOREST OF: A vast belt of plants, some carnivorous, some emitting hallucinogenic gas, which stretches across *Skornheim* and also surrounds the home of Hardol the Healer.

NORN FOREST: The great forest lying on the southern border of the *Sea of Marmora,* beneath which lies the Kingdom of the Norns.

NORN, CAVERNS OF: The caverns which lie in part beneath the *Norn Forest,* which border on the domain of the Trolls. The Norns are ruled by Karnilla, whose relationhsip to the Three Norns (the Norse Fates) has never been revealed.

RAINBOW BRIDGE: See *Bifrost.*

RINGSFJORD: A land in the far distant east, bordering on an unnamed northern sea, where Balder and Sif once encountered the fearsome entities as the Enchanters.

RIVVAK, KINGDOM OF: A land immediately to the south of Asgard, separated by the *Asgard Mountains* and the *Boiling Plain.* Originally the home of a people led by Rampok the Rebel, it is now known by the name of his successor, Rivvak the Fearless.

ROCK TROLLS, LAND OF: A mountainous area to the extreme south, inhabited by degenerate beings, into whose grasp Odin banished the traitor Seidring.

SIGURD, FOREST OF: A small wood that adjoins the southern position of the *Enchanted Forest,* inhabited and ruled over by Sigurd, a child of earth-spirits whose strength constantly increases when in contact with the ground.

SINDRI, KINGDOM OF: See *Dwarfs, Kingdom of.*

SKORNHEIM: A land in the far-distant southeast, full of perilous areas and beings, which Odin used as the location for the Trial of the Gods between Thor and Loki.

SPACE, SEA OF: The space on the western coast of the continental mass of Asgard.

STORM GIANTS, LAND OF: See *Jotunheim.*

SWORDS, VALLEY OF:A long valley filled with upjutting spikes, apparently of some incredibly hard, thorny plant, which blocks the road to Hardol the Healer and is one of the perils of *Skornheim.*

THRYHEIM: An immense Stone Hive located beyond *Utgard* in the *Sea of Fear,* inhabited by Queen Ulla and her Flying Trolls.

TROLLS, KINGDOM OF: Perhaps the most consistently deadly threat to the realm of Asgard, the Troll Kingdom lies mainly beneath Jotunheim, but the tunnels of the Trolls extend for great depths and distances, even under Asgard itself.

UTGARD: An archipelago in the distant *Sea of Fear.* The approach to it is guarded by the fearsome Utgard Dragon, who lies in a maelstrom between the *Pillars of Utgard.* King Utgard himself is a total mystery, though apparently he has great powers of illusion.

VALHALLA: A land north of Asgard, bordering *Hel,* that Odin set aside for the spirits of the honored dead. Valhalla has been imbued with special mystical properties making it fit only for ethereal life.

VARINHEIM: A distant realm, desolate with ice and fog, to which the wolf-god Fenris was banished for attacking the goddess Iduna.

WIND GIANTS, LAND OF: A land in the uttermost north and west, whose inhabitants have little to do with Asgard. It is described as being at the "other end of the universe" from *Gymirsgard.*

ZANADU: The city built inside the crystal stalactite known as the *Mystic Mountain,* once ruled by Mogul and now by Prince Alibar. The "Kingdom of *Zanadu",* said by Mogul to include the land of Hogun the Grim, is largely a figment of Mogul's imagination.

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THOR

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pollard

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR— and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning— and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard...

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The THUNDER GOD and the BI-BEAST

IN THE DEEPENING TWILIGHT FAR ASEA, A MONSTER RISES IN HISSING SPRAY... TO SPEAK IN THE VOICES OF MEN.

SURFACE-ATTAINED-LESS-THAN-MILE-FROM-PROJECTED-COURSE-OF-TARGETED-PREY.

SONAR-LOCK-ON-PREY-POINT-SEVEN-NINE-MILES-SOUTH-SOUTHEAST.

DOUG MOENCH
WRITER
KEITH POLLARD
ARTIST
GENE DAY EMBELLISHER
JOE ROSEN LETTERER
GEORGE ROUSSOS COLORIST
JIM SALICRUP
EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

ITS SIZE BELIES ITS SPEED. SWIFTLY, BUT IN SEEMING SLOW-MOTION, IT SETTLES TO THE SURFACE AND STREAKS THROUGH THE SWELLING SEA...

ENTERING-TARGET-SECTOR-NOW.

AND, LIKE ROBOTIC JONAHS WITHIN THE BELLY OF A LEVIATHAN, THE MEN INSIDE SPEAK IN THE VOICES OF MACHINES...

LOCATE-PREY-ON-MAGNISCOPE.

THERE--FREIGHTER--BUT-OF-A-NEW-DESIGN.

A-BETTER-CATCH-THEN.

SUBMERGE.

FULL-SPEED-AHEAD-FOR-THE-TARGET-PREY.

PREPARE-FOR-CAPTURE.

SO HOW DO YOU LIKE BEING SHIP'S DOCTOR--ON THE FREIGHTER'S MAIDEN VOYAGE, NO LESS?

IT'S BEEN LIKE A VACATION CRUISE SO FAR--NOTHING TO DO--NOT EVEN A SINGLE MINOR INJURY AMONG THE CREW...

STARK INDUSTRIES HAS ALWAYS TAKEN PRIDE IN ITS SAFETY RECORD, RIGHT ACROSS THE BOARD OF EVERY DIVISION. WHICH REMINDS ME, DR. BLAKE--WORD IS THAT YOU GOT YOUR JOB FROM TONY STARK HIMSELF.

THAT'S RIGHT--STARK AND I ARE...AH, ACQUAINTANCES.

HMM...

WELL, STARK'S A GOOD MAN, MYSELF, NEVER HAD MUCH USE FOR EXECUTIVES OR MILLIONAIRES--THINK THEY'RE GODS --BUT IN MY EXPERIENCE, TONY STARK'S THE EXCEPTION THAT PROVES THE RULE.

YEP, A GOOD MAN...

COUNT YOURSELF LUCKY, DR. BLAKE, TO HOLD HIM AS A FRIEND.

YES, CAPTAIN, I DO.

AND, GAZING AT THE LAST CRESCENT OF THE SUN ON THE WESTERN HORIZON, DR. DONALD BLAKE RECALLS HIS LAST MEETING WITH TONY STARK...

...DINNER AT THE PARADISE CLUB.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO MAKE RESERVATIONS *HERE*, TONY...

NOT TO WORRY, BLAKE-- I ONLY PAY HIGH TABS WHEN THEY'RE WORTH IT.

THE MENU HERE IS DEFINITELY WORTH IT.

NOW LISTEN, DON, I'M AWARE YOU LOST YOUR JOB AT THE CLINIC, BUT THIS IS NOT A HANDOUT-- IT'S A BUSINESS DEDUCTION. YOU'RE GOING TO WORK FOR ME.

REALLY?

STARK INDUSTRIES HAS BUILT A NEW CARGO FREIGHTER WHOSE ADVANCED DESIGN WILL LEAD THE WAY FOR THE FUTURE. ON HER MAIDEN VOYAGE--

--SHE'S EXPORTING EXPERIMENTAL ROCKET-ENGINES TO A BASE IN SOUTH AMERICA.

I WANT YOU TO BE HER SHIP'S DOCTOR, DON, JUST UNTIL YOU FIND SOMETHING ELSE. SHE LEAVES FROM TEXAS NEXT WEEK.

THEN SHE'LL BE GOING THROUGH THAT AREA WHERE--

YES, THE NEW "DISASTER TRIANGLE"--BUT MOST OF THOSE LOST SHIPS WERE TUBS LUCKY TO FLOAT AT ALL. STARK SHIPPING HAS YET TO LOSE A SINGLE VESSEL--

--AND OUR NEW FREIGHTER IS JAMMED WITH SAFETY FEATURES.

SHE CAN WEATHER *ANY* STORM AND THEN SOME-- THE VOYAGE WILL AMOUNT TO A VACATION CRUISE FOR YOU. HOW ABOUT IT?

ALL RIGHT, TONY, YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A SHIP'S DOCTOR-- AT LEAST FOR THIS ONE VOYAGE.

BUT NOW, DESPITE STARK'S PRO-TESTATIONS, HE CAN'T SHAKE THE FEELING THAT HE'S BEEN GIVEN A FREE RIDE-- A HANDOUT FROM A FRIEND WHO HAS GLIMPSED DESPERATION IN HIS FUTURE...

WHAT GOOD IS BEING A THUNDER GOD IF I CAN'T EVEN CONTROL MY PRIVATE HUMAN LIFE? MAYBE I WAS WRONG TO LEAVE ASGARD-- AFTER ALL, BLAKE'S BEEN LITTLE MORE THAN A HANDICAP TO THOR...

THEN, AS IF ON CUE, THE MONSTER **STRIKES.**

UNCOUNTABLE TONS OF WATER ARE DISPLACED BY THE SUDDEN UPHEAVAL--AND SENT LIKE HAMMERS TO POUND THE FREIGHTER'S DECKS...

WHAT THE--?! SOMETHING'S HAPPENING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SHIP!

GOT TO DO SOMETHING BEFORE WE CAPSIZE--

--CHANGE TO THOR--SEE IF I CAN *HELP!*

BOOM

A RAP OF HIS WALKING STICK, AND--

*--THE LAME PHYSICIAN IS REPLACED BY THE NORSE THUNDER GOD, **THOR!***

STARK SPOKE TRULY ABOUT THE SAFETY OF HIS SHIP--DESPITE THE FURY OF THE ASSAULT, 'TIS IN NO DANGER OF CAPSIZING...

WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S HAPPENING?!

I DON'T KNOW--A TIDAL WAVE OR SOMETHING!

BUT AS THOR ARCS HIGH OVER THE SHIP, UNNOTICED IN THE PANDEMONIUM--

--HIS AERIAL VANTAGE GIVES HIM A TRUE PICTURE OF THE ENCROACHING MENACE...

ODIN'S BLOOD! 'TIS SOME MANNER OF MECHANICAL MONSTER--OPENING ITS "JAWS" AS IF TO SWALLOW THE FREIGHTER!

BUT TWO MORE IMMEDIATE THREATS CATCH HIS ATTENTION--A WILDLY SWINGING CARGO NET AND A SNAPPING SMOKESTACK...

BOTH MUST BE DEALT WITH AT ONCE!

FIRST, YON CARGO NET MUST BE REMOVED!

THE MYSTIC HAMMER FLIES LIKE A BOLT OF LIGHTNING.

WHO THE--?! THOR!

YA THINK *HE* CAUSED THIS MESS?!

SWUMP

DON'T BE *CRAZY*, MAN!

HE JUST *SAVED OUR LIVES!*

PLASH

THOR, WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!

NOT NOW, MORTAL! THY SHOCK HAS BLINDED THEE TO IMPENDING DOOM!

DOOM--? WHAT ARE YOU--

THE SMOKESTACK--! IT...IT WOULD'VE CRUSHED ME!

AYE.

THE ENCHANTED HAMMER MJOLNIR MAKES ITS TURN, SEEKING TO RETURN TO THOR'S GRASP...

...BUT, FINDING ITS MASTER'S HANDS OCCUPIED, IT SETTLES OBEDIENTLY AND WITHIN REACH ON THE DECK.

GET THYSELF TO SAFETY, MORTAL-- QUICKLY!

I...I CAN'T! MY LEG-- I THINK IT'S BROKEN!

THEN I MUST HURL THE OBJECT AWAY QUICKLY-- FOR IF I DO NOT AGAIN GRASP MINE URU HAMMER WITHIN 60 SECONDS, I WILL REVERT TO THE MORTAL DR. DONALD BLAKE...!

THOR-- THAT *MONSTER!*

HEAVEN HELP US, BUT IT... IT'S GOING TO *STRIKE!*

JAWS-IN-PROPER-POSITION.

BEGIN-LOADING-OF-PREY.

TIME IS THE TRUE ENEMY NOW-- FOR THE CAPTAIN HAS BEEN STRICKEN UNCONSCIOUS!

I MUST BOTH RETURN HIM TO THE DECK-- AND RE-GAIN MY HAMMER-- WITHIN THE SHORT TIME REMAINING!

AND IF I SHOULD TAKE TOO LONG--

--THE MORTAL BLAKE WILL SURELY BE UNABLE TO COMPLETE THE TASK!

AS THE PRECIOUS SECONDS TICK AWAY, THOR SURGES FROM THE WATER WITH ALL THE STRENGTH AN ASGARDIAN GOD CAN MUSTER...

54 55

BUT WILT MY LEAP SUFFICE TO CARRY US TO THE RAIL--?!

56 57 58 59

AYE-- AND STILL I REMAIN IN MY ASGARDIAN FORM!

MAYHAP THE URGENT EVENTS HATH SERVED TO COMPRESS TIME...

BUT, IN THE NEXT INSTANT--

60

NO! TOO LATE!

I SAVED THE CAPTAIN-- BUT I LEFT THOR'S HAMMER ON THE UPPER DECK! GOT TO REACH IT BEFORE THAT MONSTER-SHIP *SWALLOWS* US!

THERE IT IS--REVERTED TO MY WALKING STICK! BUT I'VE STILL GOT TIME TO BECOME THOR AGAIN BEFORE--

NO! THE DECK IS PITCHING --SWAMPED AGAIN!

AND THE WALKING STICK IS SWEPT AWAY FROM BLAKE'S DESPERATELY OUTSTRETCHED FINGERS...

IT CLATTERS DOWN TO THE MAIN DECK--BOUNCES--AND IS WASHED INTO A CARGO HOLD WHOSE HATCH HAS BEEN POPPED BY THE PUMMELING OF THE SEA.

I'LL NEVER REACH IT IN TIME NOW--!

NOR WILL HE EVEN TRY, FOR AGAIN THE SHIP LURCHES, SLAMMING HIS HEAD AGAINST A STEEL BULKHEAD--AND STARK SHIPPING USES ONLY THE BEST, AND ***HARDEST*** STEEL.

HE TUMBLES INTO INSTANT DARKNESS...

...EVEN AS THE FREIGHTER ITSELF IS CONSUMED BY THE GREATER DARKNESS OF ITS PREDATOR'S CLOSING JAWS.

TARGET-SHIP-CAPTURED.

SUBMERGE-AND-RETURN-TO-CITY.

AN HOUR LATER, IT SHIMMERS INTO VIEW--A GLOBE OF ALIEN WONDER. FROM A DISTANCE IT IS MUCH LIKE A NOVELTY MINIATURE, AND ONE ALMOST EXPECTS PLASTIC SNOWFLAKES TO SWIRL AROUND ITS TINY GLASS-ENCASED STRUCTURES.

BUT IN TRUTH... IT IS A VAST, DOMED, *UNDERWATER CITY.*

PREPARE-FOR-DOCKING-AND-UNLOADING.

INSIDE THE APPROACHING MONSTER-SHIP, BLAKE WILL REMAIN UNCONSCIOUS FOR AN HOUR MORE...

...AND WHEN AT LAST HE AWAKENS, THE MONSTER HAS DISGORGED ITS PRIZE, AND HE IS A CAPTIVE IN THE CITY.

PIRACY! WHO *ARE* YOU?! WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?!

SILENCE.

ALL-WILL-BE-EXPLAINED-IN-DUE-TIME-BY-THE-MASTER.

THIS IS INSANE--BUT WHAT HAPPENED TO *THOR?* WHY ISN'T HE *DOING SOMETHING--?!*

YEAH? AND WHO'S YOUR "MASTER," MATE?

WE ARE!

WHO THE--?!

WE ARE...THE *BI-BEAST!*--AN ANDROID BODY EQUIPPED WITH TWO ANDROID BRAINS. *I* WAS IMBUED WITH ALL THE KNOWLEDGE OF WARFARE...

...AND *I* WAS GIVEN CULTURAL WISDOM. WE BOTH, HOWEVER, POSSESS A COMPREHENSION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY UNDREAMED OF BY HUMANS!

LONG AGO, A RACE OF *BIRD-PEOPLE* DWELT UPON AN ISLAND IN THE SKY, HIDDEN BY CLOUDS FROM THE WORLD BELOW. EVENTUALLY, THEIR ANCIENT CIVILIZATION BEGAN TO DECAY, BUT BEFORE THEY PASSED INTO OBLIVION, THEY CREATED AN ANDROID REPOSITORY OF THEIR ACCUMULATED KNOWLEDGE...

IN SHORT, THEY CREATED US -- THE *BI-BEAST!*

I...I DON'T BELIEVE IT! WHERE COULD SUCH A THING HAVE COME FROM?!

"AT FIRST WE LIVED ALONE, BUT ULTIMATELY CRAVED COMPANIONSHIP--

"--AND FOOLISHLY BROUGHT TWO CREATURES CALLED THE HARPY AND THE HULK TO OUR SIDE... WHOM WE MADE PRISONERS.

"THEN A MONSTER CALLED MODOK CAME TO CLAIM THE FLOATING ISLAND FOR HIS OWN--

"--AND WE FELL UNDER HIS MURDEROUS POWER, MORTALLY WOUNDED.

"BUT WE COULD NOT LET THE LAND OF OUR DEAD MASTERS FALL INTO OTHER HANDS. WITH OUR FINAL BREATH--

"--WE *DESTROYED* THE ISLAND, EVEN AS THE HULK AND MODOK FLED...

"...AND WE DIED.

"BUT OUR MASTERS HAD CREATED US TWINS, ONE A DORMANT REPLACEMENT.

"EVEN AS OUR BROTHER DIED, WE RECEIVED HIS MEMORIES--

"--AND PLUNGED FROM EXPLODING ISLAND--

"--TO DEEP SEA."

WE AWAKENED ABOARD THE *SHIELD* HELI-CARRIER AND DECIDED TO MAKE IT OUR NEW HOME--TO USE IT TO DESTROY THOSE WHO HAD DESTROYED OUR FORMER HOME IN THE SKY.

"BUT AGAIN THE SAVAGE HULK ATTACKED US, AND WE BATTLED LONG AND HARD ON THE OUTER DECK OF THE HOVERING HELI-CARRIER--

"--UNTIL WE BOTH PLUNGED INTO FREEFALL. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE HULK WE NEITHER KNOW NOR IMMEDIATELY CARE...

"BUT AS FOR US, WE WASHED UP ON AN ISLAND.

"BEING AN ANDROID, WE NEEDED NO SLEEP OR SUSTENANCES. THERE WAS MUCH TIME TO PLAN OUR NEXT MOVES...

"WE TOOK THE FIRST FEW SHIPS WITH OUR OWN HANDS.

"AND, AFTER SERVING SENTIENT BEINGS FOR SO LONG, FORCING THE CREWS TO SERVE *US* WAS A PLEASURE.

"USING TOOLS FROM THE CAPTURED SHIPS AND OUR KNOWLEDGE OF TECHNOLOGY, WE FASHIONED A SUBMERSIBLE.

"USING THE SUBMERSIBLE AND EXTREME HEAT, WE THEN FUSED GLASS FROM THE OCEAN-BOTTOM SAND...

"...AND CONSTRUCTED A PLATFORM AND DOME FROM WHICH ALL WATER WAS PUMPED.

"THEN BEGAN THE *REAL* WORK OF CAPTURING SHIPS --*LARGE* SHIPS--SHIPS WITH ENOUGH RAW MATERIAL AND CARGO--

"--TO CONSTRUCT THIS *ENTIRE CITY.* TOO, WE CANNIBALIZED THE SHIPS' MACHINERY TO BUILD SOPHISTICATED COMPUTER SYSTEMS--

"--WHICH CONVERTED FORMER CREWMEN TO OBEDIENT WORK-DRONES.

"INDEED, THEY ARE ALMOST LIKE ROBOTS."*

*MUCH OF THE PRECEDING FLASHBACKS COMES TO YOU COURTESY OF HULK #S 169, 215 & 216. --JIM.

AND NOW, *YOU* HAVE JOINED US.

PRECISELY.

YOU MEAN THIS ENTIRE WEIRDO CITY... WAS BUILT FROM MELTED-DOWN SHIPS?

AND THOSE... MIND-SLAVES--YOUR WORKERS--ARE ALL CREWMEN FROM THE CAPTURED SHIPS?

THEY *WERE*, CAPTAIN. NOW THEY SERVE *US*--AND US ALONE...

...JUST AS *YOU* SHALL NOW SERVE US, AS YOU JOIN THEIR RANKS...

PUT THE SKULLCAPS ON THEM!

WAIT! TO WHAT END? FOR WHAT PURPOSE?!

YOU'RE A MONSTER, YES--BUT YOU MUST HAVE *SOME* FEELINGS! WHY ARE YOU *DOING THIS?!*

VENGEANCE, CAPTAIN! THE AVIAN RACE WHICH CREATED US AS A REPOSITORY OF THEIR CIVILIZATION IS NOW EXTINCT--AND THEIR CITY HAS BEEN DESTROYED, THANKS TO *YOUR* RACE!

WE ARE ALL THAT REMAINS, THE LAST LEGACY OF A VANISHED PEOPLE, AND WE HAVE BUILT THIS CITY ANEW TO TAKE VENGEANCE ON THOSE WHO CAUSED THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ORIGINAL CITY!

NOW, WITH YOUR SHIP--AND ITS CARGO...

...OUR CAMPAIGN OF VENGEANCE IS NEARLY READY TO BEGIN!

"THANKS TO YOUR CARGO OF ROCKET-JETS, THIS CITY SHALL SOON *RISE!*

"AND, LIKE THE PHOENIX OF YOUR OWN LEGENDS, IT WILL BECOME AN AIRBORNE BRINGER OF DESTRUCTION--A TECHNOLOGICAL AVENGER OF THE SKIES!"

NOT IF *WE* CAN HELP IT, CREEP!

TAKE HIM!!

FOOLS! OUR ANDROID BODY IS IMPERVIOUS TO ANY ATTACK YOU CAN MOUNT!

SP LAMM

WE ADVISE YOUR OTHER CREWMEN NOT TO MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE, CAPTAIN. RATHER, YOU SHOULD CONSIDER YOURSELVES FORTUNATE. AFTER ALL, YOU ARE THE *LAST* WHO WILL BE TAKEN INTO THE SAFETY OF THIS CITY...

...WHILE THE REST OF HUMANITY WILL HARDLY SHARE YOUR STATION.

ALL RIGHT, MEN, NO FURTHER RESISTANCE.

A WISE CHOICE, CAPTAIN. DEVOID OF YOUR MINDS AND WILLS YOU SHALL BE, YES, BUT AT LEAST YOU WILL *LIVE*. ALL OTHERS ON EARTH SHALL *DIE*.

READY-FOR-NEXT-SUBJECT.

BUT WHEN BLAKE REACHES THE HEAD OF THE QUEUE...

WAIT! I'M A DOCTOR!

YOU ARE WHATEVER WE *SAY* YOU ARE! IF WE NEED YOUR SKILLS AS A DOCTOR, WE SHALL EXPLOIT THEM THROUGH THE COMMANDS OF OUR CYBERNETIC MIND-MANIPULATOR.

MEDICAL SKILLS CANNOT BE PROGRAMMED!

NOR CAN THEY BE MILKED FROM A ZOMBIE!

SOME OF THESE MEN ARE INJURED--NO GOOD TO YOU AS THEY ARE! I NEED TO MAKE AUTONOMOUS DECISIONS--WITH A CLEAR MIND--IF YOU EXPECT THEM TO BE HEALED!

SILENCE FOR A MOMENT, THEN ENSUES A BIZARRE ARGUMENT...

NO, SKULL-BROTHER--DON'T LISTEN TO HIM! IT DEFIES ALL THE TACTICS OF WAR TO LET A PRISONER GO FREE!

AND YET HE HAS A POINT, SKULL-BROTHER. MANY OF THOSE FROM THE OTHER SHIPS TOOK WEEKS TO RECOVER AND SOME *NEVER* RECOVERED.

NO! DON'T LET HIM DECEIVE US, SKULL-BROTHER!

BUT WHAT THREAT CAN A SINGLE HUMAN BE?

THAT'S RIGHT--I'M EVEN LAME, AS YOU CAN SEE! I'D BE NO GOOD TO YOU FOR HEAVY WORK ANYWAY...

...UNLESS YOU REALLY *ARE* FRIGHTENED OF A SINGLE LAME HUMAN?

WE FEAR *NO* HUMAN--LAME OR OTHERWISE!

THEN IT'S SETTLED, SKULL-BROTHER.

THE PHYSICIAN'S MIND SHALL REMAIN FREE--UNTIL HE HAS HEALED THE OTHERS, AND THUS HASTENED THE MOMENT OF OUR FIRST ATTACK.

AND SO, THROUGH THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS, BLAKE APPLIES HIS ART WITH UNFETTERED MIND...

MAYBE MY HUMAN FORM DOES HAVE ITS USES. THIS GAMBIT ASIDE, THE SHEER ACT OF EASING PAIN IS SURELY AS NOBLE AS ANY OF THOR'S HEROIC FEATS...

STILL, I'VE GOT TO BECOME THOR SOON--TO STOP THE BI-BEAST'S MAD PLAN AND AND FREE HIS MIND-SLAVES...

BUT WITH-OUT MY WALKING STICK, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE.

ALL-BUT-THREE-ROCKET-ENGINES-NOW-INSTALLED-UNDER-CITY.

THESE-THREE-ARE-THE-LAST.

IF ONLY I COULD GET INTO THE FREIGHTER'S CARGO HOLD TO SEARCH FOR THE STICK... BUT THEY GUARD IT CONSTANTLY AND--

WAIT! THERE IT IS--ON TOP OF THAT CRATE!

IF THEY CARRY IT OFF, IT COULD BE LOST FOREVER--!

CAREFUL-WITH-YOUR-END.

KLAK

LUCK! NOW IF I CAN ONLY REACH IT WITHOUT BEING STOPPED--!

HALT! WHERE-ARE-YOU-GOING?

MY WALKING STICK. I WAS JUST GOING TO--

IT-IS-NOT-NEEDED. YOU-CAN-LIMP.

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. THAT BANDAGE I PUT ON THE CAPTAIN IS ONLY MAKESHIFT-- HIS LEG IS *BROKEN.*

I WAS GOING TO USE THE WALKING STICK AS A *SPLINT.*

LONG, HEAVY SILENCE.

THEN-- VERY-WELL. MY-COMMANDS-ARE-TO-PERMIT-YOU-TO-DO-ANYTHING-NECESSARY-TO-HEAL-THE-INJURED.

BUT AS SOON AS BLAKE GRASPS THE CANE--

--HE DARTS FOR THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SHIP, KNOWING HE MAY NEVER SEE ANOTHER CHANCE.

STOP-HIM!

AND, ONCE OUT OF SIGHT--

BOOOM

--HE DISAPPEARS PERMA-NENTLY, SURRENDERING TO A GREATER FORCE RE-SIDING WITHIN HIS SOUL...

NOW 'TIS TIME FOR THE THUNDER GOD TO COMPLETE THE MISSION WHICH FATE DID SO CRUELLY DISRUPT!

STOP-HIM! KILL-HIM!!

THEY ATTACK ME WITHOUT KNOWING WHY, THEIR MINDS USURPED BY THE BI-BEAST'S CONTROL!

THEY BE INNOCENT OF MALICE--AND SO MUST NOT BE HARMED!

THROOH

AND NOW, WHILE THEY LAY STUNNED--

--'TIS TIME TO CONFRONT THE *TRUE* VILLAIN OF THIS MAD SCHEME!

IN MY MORTAL FORM OF BLAKE, I SAW THE BI-BEAST ENTER YON TOWER...

I CAN ONLY HOPE HE HAS NOT SINCE DEPARTED.

HE HASN'T.

HEAR ME, VILLAIN--THOU HAST EMBARKED ON A MADNESS WHICH MUST BE ENDED!

WELL, WELL, LOOK WHO'S HERE, SKULL-BROTHER.

WE HAD RECEIVED REPORTS OF A MIGHTY BEING SUCH AS YOU ABOARD THE LAST FREIGHTER, BUT WE HAD ASSUMED YOU'D FLED.

NO MATTER...FOR YOU SEE, WE HAVE FACED AND FOUGHT TO A DEADLOCK THE MIGHTIEST BEING EARTH CAN CLAIM--THE HULK!

THE HULK'S STRENGTH MAY INDEED MATCH MY OWN...

...AND HIS SAVAGERY MAY ALSO MATCH MY OWN FIGHTING HEART--BUT THE HULK'S MIND, BI-BEAST, IS LITTLE MORE THAN THE SMOTHERED MINDS OF THOSE THOU HAST MADE INTO THY SERVANTS. I REPEAT--THY MAD PLAN MUST END!

BUT THEN, AS THE FLOOR LURCHES...

TOO LATE, THOR THE CITY HAS JUST BEEN *ACTIVATED*--

--AND EVEN NOW, UNDER THE POWER OF THE FREIGHTER'S ROCKET-ENGINES, IT RISES FROM THE OCEAN FLOOR--

--SOON TO BURST INTO THE AIR FOR ITS MAIDEN VOYAGE OF DESTRUCTION!

AND THERE IS NOTHING, THOR--*NOTHING* YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT! AM I RIGHT, SKULL-BROTHER?

YES, SKULL-BROTHER--HUMANITY IS FINISHED!

THEN KNOW, VILLAIN, THAT IT IS NOT A HUMAN YE FACE--

--BUT THE SON OF ODIN, AN IMMORTAL GOD OF ASGARD!

BWOK!

THE FORCE OF HIS BLOW--IT DAMAGED THE COMPUTER!

THEN USE YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF WARFARE TO RETALIATE, SKULL-BROTHER--!

RETALIATE BEFORE HE WREAKS FURTHER DAMAGE!

THWUMPP

THEN, AS I DID SUSPECT, VILLAIN, THIS CHAMBER HOUSES THE CONTROLS OF THY ENTIRE CITY-- CONTROLS YE MUST PROTECT FROM DAMAGE LEST THY ENTIRE SCHEME COME UNRAVELED!

ONLY *SOME* OF THE CONTROLS, THOR!

ONLY CERTAIN, SMALL AREAS OF CIRCUITRY ARE CRUCIAL...

...WHILE MUCH OF THE COMPUTER MACHINERY IS *EXPENDABLE*--

THROKK

--AND CAN BE *REPAIRED* AFTER IT HAS SERVED TO DESTROY *YOU*!

THE-MASTER-IN-CONFLICT! WE-MUST-AID-HIM!

SKASHH

YES, YOU FOOLS-- HURRY!

BLAST HIM WHILE WE HOLD HIM STEADY!

BLAM

BLAM

'TIS HOPELESS THIS WAY-- I CANNOT BATTLE THEM ALL AT ONCE...

BLAM

...NOT WITHOUT INJURING ONE OF THE INNOCENT MORTALS IN THE FRAY!

BUT IF THIS CHAMBER DOES IN TRUTH HOUSE *ALL* THE CITY'S CONTROLS--

--IT MUST ALSO CONTAIN THE MACHINERY IMPRISONING THE MORTALS' MINDS!

FRAK

FRAK!

THE MYSTIC MALLET MJOLNIR CAROMS THROUGH THE CHAMBER, REBOUNDING FROM ONE WALL TO THE NEXT...

...UNTIL, AT THE END OF ITS WILD RICOCHET--

SKAK!

--IT FINDS ONE OF THOSE "SMALL AREAS OF CRUCIAL CIRCUITRY"...

...AND THE MIND-SLAVES ARE ABRUPTLY FREED, AS IF AWAKENING FROM A NIGHTMARE.

WH-WHAT'S GOING ON? WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE? THESE GUNS--?

SOMETHING HAPPENED ABOARD SHIP...CAN'T REMEMBER... THESE THINGS ON OUR HEADS...

LOOK! IT'S THOR-- BATTLING SOME KIND OF MONSTER!

USE THY WEAPONS, MORTALS--DESTROY THE MACHINERY--ALL OF IT!

BWOK

YOU HEARD THE MAN, MATES!

RIP IT UP!!

ELSEWHERE IN THE CITY, THE CREW OF TONY STARK'S FREIGHTER HAS ALSO AWAKENED...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT ZOMBIE-FEED, CAPTAIN, BUT I NEVER KNEW BEING FREE COULD FEEL SO GOOD!

QUIT CROWING ABOUT IT AND START BLASTING THIS LOUSY CITY BEFORE THAT BI-BEAST THING CAN-- *EH?!*

GOOD HEAVENS! WE...WE'RE UP IN THE SKY-- FLOATING-- FLYING! AND WE'RE HEADING FOR THE COAST OF FLORIDA!

QUICKLY, LADS-- OUR FREEDOM MUST BE THOR'S DOING-- LET'S FIND HIM AND LEND A HAND!

YOU'VE RAISED YOU'RE HAND TO US FOR THE LAST TIME, THOR!

AND AS FOR THE HUMANS YOU'VE FREED--

--THEIR ACTS OF DESTRUCTION MUST BE STOPPED!

WHUMP

FOOLS! YOU'VE MANAGED TO DESTROY NEARLY EVERYTHING *BUT* THE CRUCIAL CONSOLE--THE ONE CONTROLLING OUR WEAPONS SYSTEM!

AND NOW IT'S *TOO LATE!*

THE BI-BEAST SNAPS A SWITCH...

...AND A SIZZLING BEAM OF DESTRUCTION LANCES FROM THE CITY, RAVAGING THE FLORIDA BEACH BELOW!

IT'S A *UFO* ATTACKING US! *RUN!!*

THOR SAYS THEE NAY, VILLAIN...FOR BY REVEALING THE CRUCIAL PORTION OF THY MACHINERY--

--THOU HAST MERELY TARGETED IT FOR DESTRUCTION!

FOOL! ALL YOU'VE DONE IS DESTROY THE START-STOP SWITCH!

THE BEAM WILL CONTINUE TO DISCHARGE, BUT WILDLY NOW--COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL--AND *NO ONE* CAN STOP IT!

NO ONE? WE SHALL SEE, BI-BEAST!

WE SHALL *SEE!*

THOU SPOKEST TRULY-- THY STRENGTH IS INDEED EQUAL TO THE HULK!

BUT I SPOKE FALSELY WHEN I CLAIMED MY *MIND* WOULD WIN THE DAY...

'TIS TIME TO LEARN A LESSON FROM THE HULK-- TO EMPLOY HIS MATCHLESS SAVAGERY...

SPOOM

...TO SMASH THEE AGAIN AND AGAIN, USING THY OWN BODY TO SHATTER THE MACHINERY THOU HAST CREATED...

FRAKT

...UNTIL NEITHER MONSTER NOR MACHINE CAN *FUNCTION!*

SPLOWH

FOR TWO HEADS, MONSTER, ARE *NOT* BETTER THAN ONE... WHEN THOU ART LACKING A FIGHTING HEART.

THE BI-BEAST DOES NOT REPLY ... FROM EITHER FACE.

THOR--! THE RAY'S SHUT OFF-- BUT THE CITY IS FALLING! YOU DESTROYED THE POWER FEED TO THE ROCKET-ENGINES!

WE'RE GOING TO CRASH ON THE BEACH!

HURRY, THOR! YOU GOTTA *DO* SOMETHING!

AYE, MORTAL...

...BUT 'TIS MYSTIC MJOLNIR WHICH SHALL TURN THE FINAL TASK.

SQUNCH

*AND TURN THE MIGHTY HAMMER CERTAINLY DOES-- WHIRLING UNDER THE PLUMMETING CITY WITH INCREDIBLE SPEED, CREATING AN **AIR-CUSHION**...*

THE CITY'S DESCENT SLOWS--

--AND WHEN IT FINALLY HITS THE SAND, IT IS GENTLY...

...AND AT THE LOSS OF NOTHING BUT A BEACH UMBRELLA.

YOU DID IT, THOR--YOU *DID* IT!! I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T LET US DOWN--NOT *HARD*, ANYWAY!

AYE, 'TIS OVER... AND BUT ONE RESPONSIBILITY REMAINS...

...THE TRANSFORMATION TO THE MORTAL DR. DONALD BLAKE--THAT HE MAY COMPLETE HIS DUTY AS SHIP'S PHYSICIAN.

AND, AN HOUR LATER...

WELL, NOT EVEN TONY STARK'S RECORD IS UNBLEMISHED NOW--BUT IT SURE WAS A SPECTACULAR WAY TO BREAK THE STRING, AND ASIDE FROM THAT BROKEN STACK, I'LL BET THE FREIGHTER'S STILL SHIPSHAPE. STILL, IT'S A GOOD THING YOU WERE ALONG, DOC...

DON'T KNOW WHAT WE WOULD'VE DONE WITHOUT YOU--YOU AND THOR, OF COURSE.

OF COURSE, CAPTAIN--*OF COURSE.*

NEXT ISSUE: **MARK OF THE BEASTS!**

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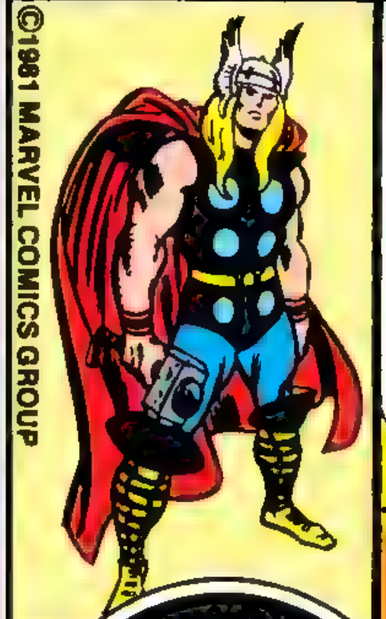

SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN!

THE MIGHTY THOR™

"OF BEASTS AND THINGS...!"

POLLARD/LAYTON

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR— and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning— and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard....

STAN LEE PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

DOUG MOENCH and KEITH POLLARD	SIMONS, STONE and MARCOS	JOE ROSEN	GEORGE ROUSSOS	JIM SALICRUP	JIM SHOOTER
WRITER — LAYOUT ARTIST	EMBELLISHERS	LETTERER	COLORIST	EDITOR	EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

OF BEASTS AND THINGS...

ROCKETING HIGH ABOVE THE FLORIDA COASTLINE, THE INVINCIBLE **IRON MAN** CYBERNETICALLY DECREASES THE SPEED OF HIS SOLAR-POWERED BOOT JETS...

INSIDE THE GLEAMING METAL MESH ARMOR OF HIS APPARENT BODYGUARD, MILLIONAIRE INDUSTRIALIST TONY STARK STARES AT THE CONFUSION BELOW IN DISBELIEF...

TH-THOSE INSANE REPORTS ARE TRUE! A FLYING DOMED CITY *DID* CRASH HERE!

I'M GLAD I DECIDED TO INVESTIGATE THIS MYSELF! STARK INTERNATIONAL'S LATEST DEVELOPMENT-- A HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED CARGO SHIP--IS SAID TO BE INVOLVED IN THIS MESS!

SO IS MY FRIEND AND FELLOW AVENGER...THE MIGHTY *THOR!*

DON'T WORRY IF YOU'RE A BIT CONFUSED, TRUE BELIEVER! WE'LL FILL YOU IN ON LAST ISSUE'S ACTION AS WE MERELY THUNDER ALONG!

LOOKS LIKE OLD HOME WEEK, THOR! HERE COMES IRON MAN-- PROBABLY BECAUSE OF THE STARK FREIGHTER.

AYE.

HELLO, THOR--I SEE YOU'VE GOT EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL.

THEN, AS THE SMALL GROUP ENTERS THE DOMED CITY...

AS AN EMPLOYEE OF STARK INDUSTRIES, I'VE BEEN DELEGATED BY TONY STARK HIMSELF TO INVESTIGATE THE HIJACKING OF HIS EXPERIMENTAL FREIGHTER.

I UNDERSTAND YOUR LEG WAS BROKEN, CAPTAIN. PERHAPS YOU CAN TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED.

DO MY BEST, IRON MAN. WE WERE NO MORE'N A HALF-DAY FROM THE COAST OF SOUTH AMERICA WITH OUR CARGO OF JET-ENGINES WHEN THIS GIANT SEA MONSTER SURFACED NEXT TO US...

I SAY "MONSTER," BUT SHE WAS REALLY JUST A DISGUISED SHIP.

"MY LEG WAS BUSTED WHEN SHE SWALLOWED THE FREIGHTER WHOLE-- WORST EXPERIENCE OF MY CAREER...NO, MY *LIFE*.

"SHE SUBMERGED AND TOOK US TO THIS DOMED CITY ON THE OCEAN FLOOR.

"THAT EXPLAINED THE AREA'S EPIDEMIC OF LOST VESSELS.

"THE CITY WAS RUN BY THE *BI-BEAST*, AN ANDROID WITH TWO BRAINS--

"--WHO WANTED TO DESTROY EARTH AS A WAY TO AVENGE HIS PAST DEFEAT BY THE HULK.

"THANKS TO OUR FREIGHT OF JET-ENGINES THE CITY WAS ABLE TO TAKE TO THE SKY.

"FLORIDA WAS THE FIRST TARGET.

"LUCKILY, THOR WAS ABLE TO STOP THE BI-BEAST AND GUIDE THE CITY TO A CONTROLLED CRASH-LANDING ON THE BEACH."*

*FOR THE FULL ACCOUNT, SEE LAST ISSUE. -- JIM.

AND THERE'S THE FREIGHTER, IRON MAN, STILL HERE INSIDE THE CITY. EXCEPT FOR A BROKEN SMOKESTACK AND DESPITE ALL SHE'S BEEN THROUGH, I'D GUESS SHE'S STILL *SHIPSHAPE*-- ALL THANKS TO *THOR*.

IRON MAN NODS, AND GESTURES TO THOR...

THANKS, CAPTAIN-- I'LL GET THE DETAILS LATER.

THEN, MOVING OUT OF SIGHT AND EARSHOT...

ALL THANKS TO THOR, EH--? AND A LITTLE HELP FROM *DR. DON BLAKE* AS WELL, NO DOUBT.

THOR SMILES FAINTLY.

SPEAKING OF WHOM, THOR, MAYBE YOU'D BETTER CHANGE BACK TO BLAKE-- THE POLICE WILL WANT A STATEMENT FROM HIM.

AYE, IRON MAN-- 'TWOULD NOT DO TO HAVE BLAKE LISTED AS MISSING.

NOW WE'VE GOT TO ARRANGE PLANS FOR REMOVING THE FREIGHTER FROM THIS DOMED CITY...

A TAP OF HIS MYSTIC HAMMER AND THOR DISAPPEARS--

--REPLACED BY DR. DONALD BLAKE, ERSTWHILE SHIP'S DOCTOR.

IF YOU ASK ME, IRON MAN--

--WE OUGHTTA JUST LEAVE THIS WHOLE WEIRD SCENE THE WAY IT IS AND OPEN IT UP AS AN AMUSEMENT PARK.

SO THAT'S THE BI-BEAST-- HANDSOME FELLOW, ISN'T HE? I JUST HOPE THE POLICE CAN KEEP HIM UNDER--

VMMM

LOOK! UP THERE! ON THE DOME CEILING!

SNAKT

VMMM

VWHOOSH

ZHZHT

THE STRANGE BEAM BATHES BI-BEAST AND POLICE GUARDS ALIKE.

IT HAS TWO EFFECTS...

FIRST, AND SHOCKINGLY, IT REVIVES THE BI-BEAST, SHATTERING HIS TITANIUM RESTRAINTS...

FOOLS! NO ONE TAKES THE BI-BEAST PRISONER!

WE ARE INDOMITABLE!

AND SECOND, EVEN MORE SHOCKINGLY, IT TURNS THE POLICEMEN INTO BERSERKERS POSSESSED BY UNREASONING HATE...

YAHRRR!

IT SEEMS, SKULL-BROTHER, THAT OUR ALLY HAS COME TO OUR AID!

YES, SKULL-BROTHER, NO ONE ELSE COULD CAUSE THE HATE-MADNESS!

BUT LOOK--THOSE UNTOUCHED BY THE RAY STRIKE AT US WITH THEIR PUNY WEAPONS!

THEN, SKULL-BROTHER, IT IS TIME TO STRIKE *BACK!*

YES-- WITH ALL THE FURY OF OUR SKILL IN WAR-FARE!

THE SITUATION IS TOO MUCH FOR A SINGLE MAN-- EVEN A MAN OF IRON...

LOOKS LIKE I SPOKE TOO SOON, BLAKE!

NO ONE WILL SEE YOU THERE!

CHANGE BACK TO THOR FAST-- THEN COME AND HELP ME!

BOHM

I'VE GOT A FEELING I'M GONNA *NEED* IT!

IRON MAN IS RIGHT. HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO HANDLE BI-BEAST...

...BUT *SOMEONE ELSE* MUST PREVENT THE POLICE FROM KILLING EACH OTHER!

BOOM

AND AS THOR THE MIGHTY-- I WILL DO MY BEST!

BUT HOW MAY THE TASK BE SERVED MOST QUICKLY--?

FLY, MJOLNIR-- FLY, MINE MYSTIC URU HAMMER!

WRAP YON MORTALS IN THE SWEEP OF THY SPELL--

--AND BIND THEM HELPLESS IN A VORTEX OF THY MAKING!

BOXERS CLAIM THAT IF YOU HIT THE BODY LONG ENOUGH, THE HEAD DIES...

BUT WITH *TWO* HEADS FACING ME, MAYBE I'D BETTER GO FOR A FAST AND FLASHY KNOCKOUT...

SPLAMM

BAH!

YOU ARE *HARD*, METAL ONE--

--JUST LIKE HULK AND THOR!

SPOOM

BUT YOU CAN BE *BEATEN* LIKE THEM *TOO!*

THAT'S FUNNY--I DON'T RECALL YOU EVER BEATING THOR *OR* THE HULK!

AND WHAT'S MORE, BI-BEAST, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BEAT--

--ME?

WHAT THE--?!

THE CRAFT THAT SNAPPED OFF THE CEILING-- IT'S USING A TRACTOR-BEAM TO PULL HIM UP!

FHRAMM

HE'S INSIDE-- AND NOW IT'S BLASTING A HOLE IN THE DOME--

--TRYING TO ESCAPE...!

BUT NOT IF *I* CAN HELP IT!

MAYBE MY BOOT-JETS *CAN'T* MATCH ITS ENGINE-- BUT THEY CAN KEEP ME CLOSE ENOUGH TO TRY *SOMETHING ELSE...!*

SOMETHING LIKE... MY *REPULSOR RAYS!*

CHOOM

THE STRANGE CRAFT TAKES THE DOUBLE HIT DEAD CENTER...

IT LURCHES...

...THEN GLOWS...

...AND FEEDS BACK THE SAME ENERGY--PLUS SOME--TO ZAP IRON MAN IN MIDAIR HIGH ABOVE THE FLORIDA BEACH!

UHN! THE FORCE IS *TREMENDOUS*-- I'M *STALLING!*

IT SHORTED OUT MY ARMOR'S POWER! NO WAY TO STOP MY FALL--!

UNLESS...YES, THERE'S A CHANCE! IF I CAN *BYPASS* THE SHORTED CIRCUITS -- RESTORE THE SUIT'S POWER BEFORE I GET TOO CLOSE TO THE GROUND...

AND IF I *CAN'T*...

WELL, NOT EVEN *MY* ARMOR CAN CUSHION A FALL FROM *THIS* HEIGHT!

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M SEEING THIS!

BUT YOU *ARE!*

BACK INSIDE THE DOMED CITY...

ENOUGH, MJOLNIR-- RETURN TO ME, MY LOYAL HAMMER!

THY VORTEX HAST DEPRIVED THEM OF OXYGEN AND THEY WILL SLEEP, NOW FOR A TIME...

YE OTHERS-- RESTRAIN THEM BEFORE THEY WAKE UP.

SURE, THOR, WE'LL TAKE CARE OF THEM-- THEY'RE OUR FRIENDS.

THEN, CARRIED ALOFT BY THE MYSTIC POWER OF MJOLNIR, THOR STREAKS FOR THE HOLE BURNED IN THE DOME ROOF...

...ONLY TO BE GREETED, OUTSIDE, BY THE GRAPHIC EVIDENCE OF IRON MAN'S PERIL.

NO--! NOT EVEN MJOLNIR CAN REACH HIM IN TIME!

THERE! I'VE JERRY-RIGGED THE CIRCUITS!

NOW TO SEE IF-- YES! MY BOOT-JETS AND REPULSORS ARE KICKING ON!

BUT IS IT IN TIME?! I'M ONLY TEN FEET FROM THE--

FSHSHSH

WHUMPP

IRON MAN! ART THOU STILL--

YES, I'M ALIVE, THOR...

...BUT JUST BARELY.

THAT CUSHION OF AIR I SET UP COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MUCH THINNER-- NOT IF I WANTED TO WALK AWAY FROM THE EXPERIENCE. SLOWED MY FALL *JUST ENOUGH...*

BUT THE CRAFT-- IT'S OUT OF SIGHT?

AYE.

THEN COME ON, THOR-- IF WE DON'T FIND IT FAST, THE BI-BEAST MAY MAKE HIS ESCAPE FOR GOOD!

STILL, HE PROBABLY WON'T GET *TOO* FAR-- I'M CERTAIN MY REPULSORS *CRIPPLED* THE CRAFT...

AND WITH THE TWO OF US SEARCHING WE OUGHT TO LOCATE IT BEFORE TOO MUCH TIME PASSES...

AYE, AND I CAN THINK OF NO BETTER MAN TO AID ME IN SUCH A SEARCH. BUT MAYHAP WE SHOULD BE ON GUARD FOR WHAT MAY AWAIT US AT THE *END* OF OUR SEARCH...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, THOR?

THE BI-BEAST IS A FOE DANGEROUS ENOW ON HIS OWN, BUT NOW WE MUST NEEDS CONSIDER A *SECOND* OPPONENT...

...HE WHO DID *PILOT* THE CRAFT WHICH SECURED BI-BEAST'S *RESCUE.*

SOME PILOT OUR ALLY TURNED OUT TO BE, SKULL-BROTHER.

YES, SKULL-BROTHER, THE BEST HE COULD MANAGE WAS A CRASH-LANDING IN THIS CURSED SWAMP.

THE CRAFT WAS *CRIPPLED*, YOU FOOL-- BY IRON MAN'S RAYS! AT LEAST I BROUGHT US DOWN GENTLY ENOUGH TO SURVIVE-- AND WITH MINIMUM DAMAGE TO THE CRAFT!

PERHAPS OUR ALLY IS RIGHT, SKULL-BROTHER-- AFTER ALL, EVEN *WE* WERE DEFEATED BY THOR...

AND, BEFORE HIM, BY THE HULK--DEFEATED *TWICE* BY THE HULK...

MAYBE, OUR ALLY, WE ARE DESTINED FOR NOTHING *BUT* DEFEAT.

YES, AS MY SKULL-BROTHER SAYS, MAYBE WE CAN *NEVER* WIN...

SHUT UP! MAYBE YOU *WOULD* HAVE FAILED, HAD I NOT BEEN HIDING IN YOUR CITY! BUT I OVERCAME *THAT* SETBACK AND I'LL OVERCOME *THIS* ONE!

THERE IS *NOTHING* MY HATE CANNOT DO!

I AM THE *MAN-BEAST*-- CREATED BY THE HIGH EVOLUTIONARY ON COUNTER-EARTH!* NOTHING CAN STOP ME!

*SEE MARVEL PREMIERE #1 & 2. -- JIM.

"EVEN *HATE ITSELF* CAN'T STOP ME! AFTER SPIDER-MAN HURLED ME INTO MY HATE-AMPLIFIER;* I LAY UNDER THE RUBBLE OF THAT EXPLOSION IN YONKERS STADIUM FOR THREE DAYS -- BUT BY THE THIRD NIGHT, THE INFUSION OF SUPREME HATE HAD ACTUALLY *STRENGTHENED* ME...

"I WAS ABLE TO BURROW MY WAY FREE AND REJOIN YOU!"

*SEE PETER PARKER #15-- JIM.

YES, YOU HAVE MADE YOUR WAY BACK TO US MANY TIMES IN THE PAST...

...BUT WE ARE NOT ENTIRELY PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS OF OUR LONG ALLIANCE.

YOU MEAN THE BY-PRODUCT OF OUR EXPERIMENTS? BAH--IT'S NOTHING! YOU'RE JUST AS STRONG AS YOU EVER WERE, AREN'T YOU?

AND THE MUTUAL BENEFITS OF OUR EXPERI-MENTS FAR OUTWEIGH YOUR INSIGNIFICANT LOSS!

"FOR ME, I WAS ABLE TO ABSORB YOUR VAST ANDROID KNOWLEDGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY! AND YOU--WHILE AN ANDROID CAN FEEL *NO* EMOTION, AT LEAST YOUR WILL TO DESTROY EARTH WAS *STRENGTHEN-ED* BY MY DRIVING FORCE OF *HATE!*"

YOUR LOSS IN MERE *HEIGHT* WAS SURELY WORTH *THAT* MUCH, WAS IT NOT?

YES, I THINK SO, BUT...

NO! I DISAGREE!

SHUT UP! WE NEED TOOLS AND MATERIALS TO REPAIR THE CRAFT!

NOW GO OUT AND GET THEM!

I SAY WE SHOULD OBEY, SKULL-BROTHER. AS RUTHLESS AND SAVAGE AS OUR ALLY MAY BE, HE SPEAKS WITH GOOD SENSE AND--

NO! I SAY WE SHOULD *NOT*--

SHOOM

BRATCH

THE ARGUMENT HAS JUST BEEN SETTLED!

NOW GO!

THIS TIME THERE IS NO FURTHER CONSULTATION.

AND WHEN THE BI-BEAST HAS MARCHED OFF INTO THE EVERGLADES...

THE SOULLESS ANDROID FOOL! A CURSE THAT I MUST HUMOR HIS FOLLY OF DESTROYING EARTH!

WHAT CARE *I* OF EARTH? MY VENGEANCE CONCERNS ONLY *COUNTER*-EARTH-- AND I SHALL NOT REST UNTIL I HAVE USED THE BI-BEAST TO *GET* ME THERE!

MEANWHILE...

EH--? CAUTION, SKULL-BROTHER-- ONE OF EARTH'S LOWLY LIFEFORMS-- AND IT IS HOSTILE TO US!

BAH! WE HAVE NO TIME, SKULL-BROTHER. SMASH IT!

FROOOH

UNKNOWN TO THE BI-BEAST, HIS WANTON ACT OF DESTRUCTION IS NOTED--

--BY COLD, DISPASSIONATE EYES! ONCE THIS CREATURE WAS A MAN-- DR. TED SALLIS--BUT THEN, A FREAK SCIENTIFIC ACCIDENT COMBINED WITH THE MYSTIC FORCES OF THE SWAMP TO TRANSFORM HIM INTO A GROTESQUE MONSTROSITY...THE MACABRE MAN-THING!

POSSESSING NO INTELLIGENCE, HE IS A PSYCHIC EMPATH--WHO FEELS THE EMOTIONAL RESONANCE OF OTHERS!

YET, NOTHING SEEMS TO EMANATE FROM THIS STRANGE INTRUDER --NO EMOTION OF ANY KIND.

PUZZLED, THE MAN-THING SHAMBLES FORWARD. WHAT MANNER OF BEING POSSESSES NO EMOTION, NO FEELINGS?

LOOK, SKULL-BROTHER-- ANOTHER EARTH DENIZEN!

WHY DOES THE INTRUDER MOVE? HOW? IF IT FEELS NOTHING, SURELY IT CANNOT BE ALIVE...?

YES, SKULL-BROTHER, BUT A DENIZEN WE HAVE NEVER ENCOUNTERED BEFORE...

WHAT COULD IT *BE*?

IT DOES NOT MATTER, SKULL-BROTHER. IT IS SIMPLY AN OBSTACLE IN THE PATH OF OUR TASK.

I AGREE -- IT MUST BE RE-MOVED.

PERHAPS HIS SENSES ARE WRONG. IF SO, THERE IS A TEST.. FOR, WHOEVER KNOWS FEAR... *BURNS* AT THE MAN-THING'S TOUCH.

SO...

BAH! THE THING *ATTACKS* US, SKULL-BROTHER.

YES--THE TIME HAS COME TO *REMOVE* IT.

NOTHING! THE INTRUDER DOES NOT BURN, NOR DOES HE FLEE. INDEED, HE EXHIBITS NOTHING BUT--

SPLAMM

--CONTEMPT.

AND YET, EVEN THE CONTEMPT CARRIED NONE OF THE FLAVOR OF EMOTION. THE VIOLENCE WAS CASUAL, ITS GOAL LESS THAN PAIN...

A STRANGE BEING.

HE MUST FOLLOW IT...AND LEARN MORE.

SAY, BILLIE-SUE, THAT BEER ICED YET? IT'S BEEN--

WE ARE TAKING OVER, HUMANS!

HUH--?

GET INTO YOUR VEHICLES AND FOLLOW US!

WE... WE'RE BEIN' KIDNAPPED BY A *UFO-MONSTER!*

DON'T BE STUPID! IT'S JUST SOME DUMB PUNK PULLIN' A CHEAP STUNT!

AND AIN'T NO PUNK TELLIN' *ME* WHAT TO DO!

LED ZEP

THEY NEVER LEARN, SKULL-BROTHER.

NO...NOT WITHOUT PAIN.

SWUDD

OH...MY...

SKRRR...

RUNCHH

THE ARGUMENT HAS JUST BEEN SETTLED! NOW GO-- INTO YOUR VEHICLES!

IF IT WORKED FOR THE MAN-BEAST...WHY NOT?

BETWEEN THEM, THEY HAVE PLENTY OF TOOLS, SKULL-BROTHER.

YES, AND WE CAN USE PARTS OF THE VEHICLES THEMSELVES FOR RAW MATERIAL.

KEEP GOING, HUMANS-- THAT WAY!

AND TWILIGHT IN THE EVERGLADES...

...DEEPENS INTO FULL NIGHT.

IT'S COMPLETELY DARK, THOR, AND STILL NO SIGN OF THE STRANGE CRAFT.

DOTH THOU SUGGEST SUSPENDING THE SEARCH 'TILL DAWN?

NO NEED FOR THAT, THOR.

OH?

HAST THY ARMOR SOME NEW TRACKING DEVICE?

WELL, YOU *MIGHT* CALL IT A TRACKING DEVICE, BUT IT'S CERTAINLY NOT NEW...

IT'S CALLED *LIGHT*--FROM MY *CHEST-BEACON.*

AND LOOK WHAT IT'S PICKED UP *DEAD AHEAD...*

A RISING COLUMN OF SMOKE--!

IT *MUST* BE THE CRAFT-- BURNING AFTER THE CRASH!

THE WELDING GOES SWIFTLY, MAN-BEAST-- FEAR MAKES THEM WORK WELL.

YES, THE REPAIRS ARE ALMOST COMPLETED--AND YOU WERE READY TO *GIVE UP*, YOU FOOL!

LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE TAKEN A WHOLE TRAILER CAMP *HOSTAGE*, THOR-- LOT OF INNOCENT PEOPLE COULD GET HURT...

AYE, WE NEED TWO THINGS-- LIGHT AND SURPRISE. ART THOU READY FOR BATTLE, IRON MAN?

READY.

THEN STAND THEE BACK WHILST I CALL UPON MY POWERS AS *LORD OF STORMS!*

A MOMENT EARLIER IT WAS A MUGGY BUT CLEAR NIGHT-- BUT NOW, THOUGH NO RAIN FALLS, THE HEAVENS RUMBLE AND FLARE...

MYSTICALLY ORCHESTRATED, JAGGED FORKS OF LIGHTNING LICK DOWN TO ERECT A WALL OF LIGHT AROUND THE ENCAMPMENT...

MAN-BEAST! WHAT COULD IT--

--*MEAN?*

SHUT UP, FOOL! I DON'T KNOW!

THY VILLAIN-OUS DEEDS ARE ENDED, BI-BEAST!

AND *THOU*, SUPER-BEAST-- THOU AND I DID ONCE BEFORE DO BATTLE!* PREPARE THYSELF FOR THE SAME!

THOR! IT'S *THOR!!*

**SEE THOR* 134. -- JIM.*

I'M CALLED *MAN-BEAST* NOW, THUNDER GOD, AND THE RESULT OF OUR BATTLE WILL BE *DIFFERENT* THIS TIME! I HAVE THE *BI-BEAST* AT MY SIDE--

--AND THERE IS NO WAY YOU CAN DEFEAT US BOTH!

MAYBE NOT, BEASTIES-- BUT THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN TAKE BOTH OF *US* EITHER!

WHAT?! THE *OTHER ONE--!*

ALL RIIIGHT! IRON MAN TOO-- THE HEE-ROES HAVE *ARRIVED!*

YEAH-- LET'S SETTLE IN FOR SOME *AK-SHUN!*

BLAST THEM WITH YOUR *HATE-RAY,* MAN-BEAST! LET THEM KILL *EACH OTHER!*

FOOL! THOR IS A GOD--MY RAY WILL HAVE NO EFFECT ON *HIM!* AND THE OTHER ONE MAY BE PROTECTED BY HIS ARMOR!

THIS IS ONE BATTLE WE MUST WIN ON--

SKOOM

--SHEER FORCE!

FROOM

HAH! YOU *SEE*, THUNDER GOD?! EVEN WITHOUT THE EFFECTS OF THE *HATE MADNESS*, MY BLASTS ARE MORE POWERFUL THAN YOU DREAMED!

AND *NOW*--

AND NOW, VILLAIN...

...'TIS TIME FOR THE POWER OF *THOR THE MIGHTY* TO BE FELT!

SKU

RAK T

SHOOT! NO SENSE IN BEIN' *HOGGISH* ABOUT RINGSIDE SEATS!

AND SO, IN THE ARENA CREATED BY THE ENCIRCLING FIRE, FOUR BIZARRE GLADIATORS STRUGGLE FOR THEIR LIVES...

AND NEVER HAS A STRUGGLE BEEN CONTESTED MORE HOTLY, NOR WITH GREATER FURY!

SPOOM

EVEN THE PERVASIVE WALL OF SOUND CREATED BY CRICKETS, NIGHTBIRDS, AND SWAMP-FROGS CRUMBLES INTO SILENCE...

...UNTIL THERE IS NOTHING BUT THE HARSH NOISE OF VIOLENCE.

THROKK

SEEMS TO ME THIS IS WHERE WE LEFT OFF BEFORE, TWO-FACE...

...AND I WARN YOU, I'M STILL GOING FOR THE FAST AND FLASHY--

--KNOCKOUT!

THOR! LOOK OUT!!

UHNN!

C'MON -- LET'S CUT THROUGH THE 'GLADES *THIS* WAY!

YEAH -- AFTER THOSE TWO BACK THERE, CAN'T BE ANY *OTHER* MONSTERS IN THIS SWAMP!

YES -- PROOF THAT HIS SENSES ARE INTACT, FOR THE FEAR IS **RIPE** ON THESE CREATURES...

YAAHH

...UNLIKE THE FOUR STRANGE ONES WHO HAVE INVADED HIS HOME. HE RECEIVES IMPRESSIONS OF EMOTION FROM THREE OF THEM...BUT STILL NO FEAR.

THOR -- ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

AYE, IRON MAN -- 'TWOULD TAKE FAR MORE TO FELL THE GOD OF THUNDER.

A GOD, ARE YOU? -- MEANING YOU PROBABLY FEEL *LITTLE PAIN*...

WELL, KNOW THIS, THUNDER GOD -- WE ARE AN *ANDROID*...

KLUD

...AND ANDROIDS DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT PAIN *IS*!

NOW, SKULL-BROTHER -- BLAST HIM WHILE HE'S DOWN!

TOO SLOW, SKULL-BROTHER -- HE'S ROLLED FREE!

YES... BUT SOONER OR LATER, SKULL-BROTHER, WE SHALL HAVE HIM!

WE MUST AVENGE HIS VICTORY OVER US IN THE DOMED CITY!

SO STRANGE TO WITNESS SO MUCH VIOLENCE AND YET PERCEIVE NO FEAR. STILL, ONE OF THE FOUR EMANATES IMPOSSIBLY STRONG WAVES OF AN EMOTION CLOSELY ALIGNED WITH FEAR...

FALL, MAN OF IRON! FALL AND *DIE*!

KLONG

*...THE EMOTION CALLED **HATE**.*

BUT...WHY ARE FOUR SUCH EXTRAORDINARY BEINGS HERE?

WHERE DID THEY COME FROM?

FROM THAT STRANGE METALLIC CRAFT, PERHAPS? AND ARE THERE MORE INSIDE?

PERHAPS, WHEN THE RING OF FIRE DIES DOWN, HE SHOULD INVESTIGATE...

ENOW, VILLAIN-- THOR SAYS ENOW!

IF THOU ART IN TRUTH AN ANDROID, AND BEYOND FEELINGS--

THROK

--THEN THERE IS NO FURTHER NEED FOR THOR TO BLUNT THE FULL FURY OF HIS BLOW!

NO! THE BI-BEAST HAS FALLEN! I CAN'T FIGHT BOTH OF YOU ALONE!

I'VE GOT TO MAKE A BREAK FOR IT--

FROOM

--AND HOPE THE REPAIRS TO THE CRAFT ARE SUFFICIENT!

MY ARMOR PROTECTED ME FROM HIS HATE MADNESS, THOR...

"...BUT THE BLAST STILL PREVENTED ME FROM STOPPING HIM!"

WE MAY YET STOP HIM, IRON MAN...

STRIKE THE CRAFT *LONG DISTANCE*, YOU MEAN? YES-- BUT AFTER THE LAST TIME, I'M NOT GOING TO MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE...

JUST LET ME FLIP ON MY ARMOR'S *EXTRA INSULATION.*

OKAY, THOR.

BETWEEN THE TWO OF US, I THINK WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLIP THAT BIRD'S WINGS FOR GOOD, DON'T YOU?

AYE.

THE DEPARTING CRAFT IS RUPTURED TWICE SIMULTANEOUSLY...

...BY REPULSOR RAYS AND THE MYSTIC POWER OF URU, SCIENCE AND MAGIC, ANCIENT FOES NOW OPERATING IN TANDEM...

...TOWARD A COMMON END.

NO!! I'M LOSING CONTROL! THE CRAFT IS GOING DOWN--

"--STRAIGHT INTO THAT *BOG OF QUICKSAND!!*"

BLUPT

IT SINKS, SWALLOWED BY THE THICK BOG, LONG BEFORE THE TWO HEROES CAN REACH IT...

DO YOU SEE IT, THOR?

NAY...

LOOKS LIKE IT'S GONE FOR GOOD, THEN.

I GUESS THE MAN-BEAST'S HATE BOOMERANGED ON HIM...

AYE--LIKE ALL HATE, IRON MAN.

NOW COME--WE MUST RETURN THE BI-BEAST TO THE AUTHORITIES.

BUT WITHIN THE CRAFT DEEP UNDER THE OOZE, THOUGH THE MAN-BEAST LIES STIFF AND LIFELESS, THERE COMES THE SOUND OF MOIST SHUFFLING...

THE IMPRESSION OF HATE RECEIVED IN SUCH CLOSE QUARTERS WAS ALMOST OVERWHELMING--

--BUT IT HAS HALTED NOW, LEAVING A CURIOUS FEELING OF PEACE AND FREEDOM.

YET HE SEEMS TO BE TRAPPED IN THIS PLACE FILLING WITH MUD...

SHOULD HE TRY TO ESCAPE, OR SIMPLY TAKE COMFORT IN THE SURROUNDING OOZE? PERHAPS HE SHOULD WAIT AND SEE.

PERHAPS HE SHOULD MERELY WAIT FOREVER...

THY THANKS IS APPRECIATED, MORTALS--BUT NO, WE CANNOT STAY FOR THY...AH, "COOKOUT!"

THAT'S OKAY, THOR--WE UNDERSTAND, AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT OTHER DANGED MONSTER...

ONCE A BODY GOES INTO A BOG LIKE THAT, HE DON'T *NEVER* COME OUT!

PERHAPS NOT... BUT THEN AGAIN, THERE'S ALWAYS A FIRST TIME--EVEN FOR BEASTS AND THINGS...

NEXT ISSUE · CHAOS AT CANAVERAL!

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THE MIGHTY

THOR™

"CHAOS AT CANAVERAL!"

FEATURING THE MENACE OF THE MAN-BEAST!

pollard

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR— and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning— and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard...

STAN LEE PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

"CHAOS AT CANAVERAL"

AFTER DELIVERING THE BI-BEAST TO THE AUTHORITIES, * THOR HAS JOINED IRON MAN AT THE KENNEDY SPACE CENTER IN CAPE CANAVERAL, FLORIDA...

'TIS... AWESOME.

VERILY, OF ALL THE TECHNOLOGICAL WORKS OF MORTAL MAN, THIS BE BOTH THE MOST IMPRESSIVE... AND THE MOST POIGNANT.

THEN THY BUSINESS IN BEHALF OF STARK INDUSTRIES IS CONCLUDED, IRON MAN?

RIGHT, THOR, AND I GUESS I'D BETTER GET BACK TO LONG ISLAND-- BUT HOW DO YOU LIKE THE CAPE?

TO BE MORTAL... AND YET TO DREAM OF REACHING THE VERY HEAVENS-- A PERFECT CONCEIT, YET A LAUDABLE GOAL.

USA

*SEE LAST ISSUE. --JIM.

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IF YOU FEEL *THAT* WAY ABOUT IT...CARE TO STICK AROUND AS BLAKE FOR A TOUR? I CAN ARRANGE A *V.I.P.* PASS...

AYE--BLAKE HAS NOTHING BETTER TO DO UNTIL HIS JOURNEY TO CHICAGO NEXT WEEK.

AND I THINK HE WOULD *ENJOY* SUCH A TOUR.

ALL THAT REMAINS IS TO SUMMON HIM--

--THROUGH THE POWER OF *MJOLNIR*, MINE MYSTIC URU HAMMER...

BOOM

AND THE LAME PHYSICIAN DR. DONALD BLAKE RISES, NO LESS AWED THAN THOR BY THE TECHNOLOGICAL WONDER OF THE CAPE...

HERE'S YOUR PASS, DON. STAY AS LONG AS YOU LIKE.

BEING A STARK EMPLOYEE HAS ITS PERKS EH, IRON MAN? THANKS.

COME ON--I'LL WALK YOU TO THE VISITORS' CENTER...

BETTER THAN THAT--HERE'S *DIANE*...

IRON MAN--I DIDN'T KNOW *YOU* WERE HERE!

COMMAND CONTROL

DIANE LAMARR, THIS IS DR. DONALD BLAKE, A FRIEND OF MINE.

HOW DO YOU DO, DOCTOR.

PLEASE--"DON" IS FINE.

DIANE IS TRAINING TO BE ONE OF OUR FIRST FEMALE ASTRONAUTS...

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE DON THE ROYAL TOUR, DIANE?

I'D BE GLAD TO--EVEN IF IT MIGHT BE ONE OF THE LAST THINGS I'LL DO AROUND HERE IN AN OFFICIAL CAPACITY.

AND ON THAT CRYPTIC NOTE, LET'S SHIFT TO A NEARBY SWAMP AT THE EDGE OF THE EVERGLADES...

A LONE CRANE CRIES IN THE DISTANCE AND THEN ALL IS SILENT... SAVE FOR THE WET BURBLE OF AIR BREAKING THE THE THICK SURFACE...

...AIR RISING FROM THE SUB-MERGED SKY-CRAFT OF THE MAN-BEAST WHO NOW LIES UNCONSCIOUS AMIDST THE TWISTED WRECKAGE.

THE **MAN-THING**, HOWEVER, WHO BOARDED THE CRAFT SHORTLY BEFORE ITS FINAL FLIGHT AND CRASH, *IS FULLY CONSCIOUS...

...OR AT LEAST AS CONSCIOUS AS HIS VAGUE AND TROUBLED MIND CAN EVER BE.

AND RIGHT NOW, AS THE CRAFT FILLS EVER HIGHER WITH SWAMP SLUDGE, THE MUCK-ENCRUSTED GROTESQUERIE FINDS HIMSELF MORE CONFUSED THAN EVER.

*AGAIN, SEE LAST ISSUE. --JIM.

HE IS INTRIGUED BY THIS **MAN-BEAST** CREATURE, FOR HIS NORMAL EMPATHY HAS BEEN UNABLE TO PERCEIVE THE IMPRESSIONS OF FEAR EVINCED BY NEARLY ALL WHO LOOK UPON HIM.

THERE IS, HOWEVER, AN OVERWHELMING IMPRESSION OF A RELATED EMOTION...

IT IS **HATE**--AND EVEN NOW IT SEEMS TO BOIL AND OOZE FROM THE MAN-BEAST'S DORMANT MIND.

BUT HOW COULD IT BE SO STRONG? AND WHAT TO DO WITH HIM--?

LEAVE HIM HERE?-- TO BE ENTOMBED BY THE INVADING SWAMP-STUFF?

NO.

IT WOULD LEAVE TOO MANY QUESTIONS UNANSWERED, TOO MANY FEELINGS... UNSATISFIED.

AND SO...

...CURIOSITY WINS.

HE WILL TAKE THE MAN-BEAST AWAY SOMEWHERE, PERHAPS FOR FURTHER STUDY... IF HE CAN REMEMBER, THAT IS, WHAT HE WISHES TO STUDY.

DESTINATION UNKNOWN, HE NEVERTHELESS FEELS AN URGENT NEED TO REACH IT, AND INSTANTLY CORRECTS EACH FALSE TURN.

BUT HOW CAN THIS BE? WHAT IS GUIDING HIM?

SIMPLY, AND SADLY, HE DOES NOT KNOW.

INDEED, HE HAS ALREADY FORGOTTEN THAT HE DRAGS THE MAN-BEAST BEHIND HIM, AND MERELY SHAMBLES ON...

YET, A LONG TIME LATER, HE RECOGNIZES THE DESTINATION WHEN HE SEES IT--AND FEELS ITS IMAGE BURNING IN HIS MIND.

NASA RESTRICTED AREA KEEP OUT VIOLATORS WILL BE PROSECUTED

BUT NOW WHAT?

AGAIN HE DOES NOT KNOW.

THEN, STUMBLING OVER IT, HE AGAIN BECOMES AWARE OF HIS BURDEN, AND OF SOME VAGUE NOTION ABOUT STUDYING IT...

SO HE SETTLES DOWN INTO CONCEALMENT AND PEERS THROUGH THE BRUSH AT THE MAN-BEAST, KEEPING SILENT VIGIL FOR REASONS UNKNOWN.

--AND EVEN THOUGH THE SPACE SHUTTLE IS LAUNCHED FROM HOUSTON, IT WAS CONSTRUCTED HERE IN FLORIDA, DON.

I SUPPOSE YOU HEARD ABOUT ALL THE TROUBLE WITH THE THERMAL-SHIELD TILES...

YES-- THEY SEEM JINXED.

WELL, WE'LL LICK THE PROBLEM YET--SOONER OR LATER.

WE'LL BE LAUNCHING AN EXPERIMENTAL WEATHER SATELLITE TODAY AT TWO. IF YOU'D LIKE, WE CAN LUNCH TOGETHER AND WATCH THE LAUNCH...

I'D LIKE, DIANE-- VERY MUCH.

SLOWLY, THE MAN-BEAST COMES TO HIS SENSES, AND FOR A MOMENT HIS CONFUSION RIVALS THE MAN-THING'S...

WH-WHERE--? THE SPACE CENTER?!

I WAS HEADED HERE WHEN MY CRAFT WAS BLASTED BY THOR AND IRON MAN, BUT I... I CAN'T REMEMBER A THING AFTER THAT...

THEN, EVEN IN MY DELIRIUM, MY DRIVE-- MY HATE--WAS TOO STRONG TO THWART!

STILL CONFUSED, THE MAN-THING MERELY WATCHES FROM CONCEALMENT...

...AS HIS STRANGE, HATE-FILLED OBJECT OF STUDY BOLDLY INVADES CAPE CANAVERAL.

NASA

I MUST HAVE MANAGED TO PILOT THE CRIPPLED CRAFT TO A SPOT NEARBY-- THEN CRASHED AND STUMBLED THE REST OF THE WAY ON FOOT-- AND FINALLY COLLAPSED RIGHT IN FRONT OF MY DESTINATION.

AND NOW...

NOW NOTHING CAN STOP ME!

WHAT THE--? WHO'S THIS JOKER IN THE HALLOWEEN COSTUME--?

FOOLS! I AM THE MAN-BEAST-- MASTER OF HATRED!

AND TO PROVE IT, THE HATE-RAY BLASTS FROM HIS EXTENDED HANDS...

...INSTANTLY FORCING ITS TARGETS TO GO FOR EACH OTHERS' THROATS.

I HATE YOU-- I'M GONNA KILL YOU!

THE MAN-BEAST SNEERS, STRIDING INTO THE INNER COMPLEX.

MEANWHILE, AT THE VISITORS' CAFETERIA...

SO YOU'RE FROM NEW YORK, DON?

YES, AND... UH, WELL... FROM ANOTHER PLACE.

WHAT'S WRONG, DON? WHY DO YOU SAY IT LIKE THAT?

JUST HOMESICK NOW AND THEN-- I GUESS EVERY-ONE'S HOME TOWN SEEMS BETTER THAN IT IS...

...LIKE A SHINING REALM OF SPLENDOR YOU CAN ONLY REVISIT IN THE DREAMS OF YOUR OTHER SELF.

BUT TELL ME, DIANE-- WHAT DID YOU MEAN ABOUT THIS TOUR BEING YOUR "LAST OFFICIAL ACT"?

BUDGET CUTS TO *NASA* ARE GOING TO LIMIT THE NUMBER OF ASTRONAUT TRAINEES, DON, AND SINCE WOMEN WERE THE LAST TO BE ADMITTED TO THE PROGRAM WE'VE GOT THE LEAST TENURE AND WE'LL BE THE FIRST TO GO.

SO... MY DREAMS OF ACTUALLY EXPLORING THE MYSTERIES OF SPACE WILL HAVE TO WAIT EVEN LONGER.

IF I WEREN'T SO AFRAID OF BEING "TOO MUCH LIKE A WOMAN," I'D CONFESS THAT IT'S GOING TO BREAK MY HEART. I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT I'LL DO IN THE FUTURE...

I THINK I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, DIANE. MY OWN FUTURE HAS A RATHER UNCERTAIN CAST TO IT...

YOU SEE, I JUST LOST MY JOB TOO-- AT A CLINIC IN MANHATTAN.

YOU DID? THEN YOU REALLY *DO* KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.

TELL ME, DON... HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH THE FEELING OF--

ATTENTION! THE LAUNCH COUNTDOWN WILL COMMENCE IN FIFTEEN MINUTES.

AH, WELL, ENOUGH DEPRESSION.

SHALL WE?

WE CAN'T GET *TOO* CLOSE TO THE LAUNCH-PAD, MISTER, BUT IF I SWING MY WEIGHT AROUND I THINK I CAN ARRANGE THE BEST SEATS IN THE HOUSE.

SO SWING IT, LADY. I'M GAME FOR--

A *MONSTER!* WE THOUGHT IT WAS A JOKE-- BUT IT'S *REAL!* SOME KINDA *WOLFMAN IS LOOSE ON THE BASE!*

WHAT THE--?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE BABBLING ABOUT, BUT IF THE LAUNCH IS SCRUBBED I MAY BE *NEEDED!*

SOME KIND OF "WOLFMAN"--?

SORRY, DON-- CATCH YOU LATER!

COULD IT BE THE *MAN-BEAST* AGAIN?

IT'S CERTAINLY NOT A FALSE ALARM-- *SOMETHING* HAD TO CAUSE ALL THAT FEAR AND PANDEMONIUM...

AND IF THERE'S THE LEAST CHANCE THAT IT *IS* THE MAN-BEAST--

--THEN, BY THE POWER OF MJOLNIR--

--THE MIGHTY THOR SHALL STAND READY TO PUT THE VILLAIN DOWN!

AND SO RESOLVED, THE STEEL-THEWED SCION OF ASGARD EMERGES FROM HIS PLACE OF CONCEALMENT...

...ONLY TO FIND--

HATE! I HATE YOU!!

AYE, 'TIS HIM BEHIND THIS--THEY ARE POSSESSED BY THE MAN-BEAST'S HATE!

BUT WHERE *IS* HE?

THEN, SENSING A CALMING PRESENCE IN THE MIDST OF THE BERSERK FUROR--

--THOR TURNS TO FACE... THE MAN-THING.

AND THERE IS SOMETHING IN THE MUCK-MONSTER'S EYES WHICH SEEM TO BECKON HIM...

...SOME KIND OF APPEAL-- OR IS IT THE OPPOSITE? SOME KIND OF... *OFFER?*

ART THOU THE MONSTER THEY FEAR--?

NAY-- THOU ART NO "WOLF-MAN"-- NOR IS THERE HATE IN THEE DO YOU WISH TO AID ME--?

HE IS CONFUSED, SENSING THAT HE HAS SOMEHOW BEEN USED BY THE MAN-BEAST FOR EVIL PURPOSES, AND HE WISHES TO REVERSE WHAT HE HAS DONE. BUT WILL THIS ONE SHOW FEAR--? NO... FOR WHAT-EVER KNOWS FEAR BURNS AT THE MAN-THING'S TOUCH...

...AND THIS DOES NOT BURN.

IN THE LAUNCH CONTROL CENTER...

COUNTDOWN T-MINUS 300... 299... 298...

WHAT?! SECURITY HAS BEEN *BREACHED*--? THEN WE'VE GOT TO HALT THE COUNTDOWN-- SCRUB THE LAUNCH!

BUT BEFORE THE TECHNICIANS CAN REACT TO THE NEWS--

BLASHH

--THE MAN-BEAST CRASHES THE FINAL BARRICADES, SPRAYING HATE-RAYS BEFORE HIM...

STOP IT, YOU FOOL! I TELL YOU THE LAUNCH MUST BE SCRUBBED!

OVER MY DEAD BODY, YOU STINKING SNAKE!

...284... 283... 282...

AND THE COUNTDOWN CONTINUES, AS THE MAN-BEAST CROWS IN TRIUMPH...

HUMAN FOOLS! NOTHING CAN STOP ME-- *NOTHING*, I TELL YOU!

IN LESS THAN FIVE MINUTES, MY DREAM OF HATE WILL HAVE BEEN SERVED! IN LESS THAN FIVE MINUTES, I SHALL LEAVE THIS CURSED EARTH BEHIND ME!

HOW LONG I HAVE WAITED FOR THIS *MOMENT*-- HOW MUCH I MUST SAVOR ITS GLORY! DO YOU KNOW WHERE I *COME FROM*, FOOLS? DO YOU KNOW WHAT I *AM*?!

I AM THE *MAN-BEAST,* A PERFECT SYNTHESIS OF THE HIGHER AND LOWER ORDER OF LIFE!

BORN OF SCIENCE, I WAS CREATED BY THE HATED *HIGH EVOLUTIONARY OF COUNTER-EARTH*-- HE WHO TOOK LOWLY BEASTS AND EVOLVED THEM TO THEIR HIGHEST POTENTIAL!

"I WAS KNOWN AS THE *SUPER-BEAST* THEN, WHEN I FIRST BATTLED THOR ONLY TO SUFFER BASE DEFEAT AT HIS HANDS...

"BUT THE CRAVING FOR VENGEANCE-- THE *HUMAN* QUALITY WITHIN ME WAS TOO STRONG TO BE CONQUERED, AND SO I CAME BACK!

"INDEED, I THOROUGHLY CORRUPTED COUNTER-EARTH-- THAT NEARLY TWIN WORLD ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE SUN--

"--BEFORE THE *WARLOCK* TREACHEROUSLY REVERTED ME TO MY ORIGINAL WOLF FORM...

"BUT YEARS LATER I TRIUMPHED YET AGAIN--

"--REGAINING MY INDOMITABLE EVOLVED FORM!

"I EVEN MASTERED THE POWERS OF THE *HATE-RAY*--

"--AND, AS THE *HATE MONGER,* I VERY NEARLY DESTROYED THE VAUNTED *SPIDER-MAN!*

"AND ALL ALONG I MAINTAINED MY SECRET PARTNERSHIP WITH THE *BI-BEAST,* CUNNINGLY AWAITING THE MOMENT OF FINAL VENGEANCE ON MY MAKER!"

AND NOW THAT MOMENT HAS COME! NOW I SHALL USE YOUR WEATHER SATELLITE TO ONCE AGAIN REACH COUNTER-EARTH--AND *DESTROY IT FOREVER!**

* WHAT THE MAN-BEAST DOES NOT KNOW, HOWEVER, IS THAT COUNTER-EARTH HAS BEEN **MOVED** FROM ITS ORIGINAL ORBIT ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE SUN. SEE ***MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE*** #61-63.--JIM.

SLOWLY, TORTUOUSLY, THE MAN-THING HAS COME TO A DECISION: IF THIS NEW BEING DOES NOT BURN, IF HE FEELS NO FEAR--

--THEN PERHAPS HE CAN CONTEND WITH THE *OTHER* FEARLESS BEING.

MOREOVER, THIS NEW BEING RADIATES WAVES OF OTHER IMPRESSIONS...

...TRANSCENDENT FEELINGS OF VALOR AND NOBILITY--QUALITIES THE MAN-THING HAS NEVER BEFORE PERCEIVED TO SUCH A DEGREE.

YE WOULD HAVE ME *FOLLOW* YOU--?

PERHAPS THEY CAN CANCEL THE OTHER'S HATE, AND THUS UNDO THE EVIL HE HAS HELPED BRING ABOUT.

MEANWHILE, AS DIANE LaMARR REACHES LAUNCH CONTROL...

THEN IT... IT'S TRUE! IT *IS* SOME KIND OF MONSTER!

...234... 233... 232...

KILL... WANT TO *KILL* YOU!

IT'S INSANE-- THE WHOLE THING!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THEM, BUT THEY'LL TEAR ME APART IF I SET FOOT IN THERE!

THERE'S NO WAY TO STOP THE LAUNCH!

AND THAT MONSTER WAS HEADING FOR THE LAUNCH GANTRY-- MAYBE TO SABOTAGE THE SATELLITE!

I CAN'T LET IT HAPPEN!

IF THE SPACE PROGRAM SUFFERS *ANOTHER* MAJOR FOUL-UP, THEY'LL *REALLY* CUT THE BUDGET...

SO IF I CAN'T STOP THE LAUNCH... THEN I'VE GOT TO STOP THE MONSTER!

NASA

THERE HE IS--CLIMBING RIGHT UP THE GANTRY.

WITH ANY LUCK, THE ELEVATOR BEAT HIM TO THE TOP!

...198...197... 196...

THE GANTRY ELEVATOR RISES SMOOTHLY, SWIFTLY, BUT NOT SWIFTLY ENOUGH FOR DIANE LAMARR...

SHE POUNDS THE WALL WITH IMPATIENCE.

THE MONSTER WAS CLIMBING FASTER THAN SHE COULD HAVE DREAMED POSSIBLE--HE MUST BE NEARING THE CAPSULE BY NOW...

AH! THE ENTRANCE HATCH--AND MY MEANS TO FINAL REVENGE!

THE ELEVATOR COMES TO A HALT--BUT IS SHE IN TIME?

THE DOORS SLIDE OPEN, AND--

YES!

WHAAAT--?!

YON ROCKET, MAN-MONSTER--IS THIS WHERE YOU WOULD LEAD ME?

IN RESPONSE, AND ONLY AFTER SUPREME EFFORT, THE MAN-THING POINTS...

AYE--I SEE HIM, NEAR THE TOP...

'TIS IN TRUTH THE VILLAINOUS MAN-BEAST...

"BUT WAIT! THERE IS ONE OTHER--ONE HE ATTACKS!"

HUMAN FOOL!

SWAP

HOW DARE YOU ASSAULT THE MAN-BEAST?!

NO! STAY AWAY! I WON'T LET YOU SABOTAGE THE LAUNCH!

AND HOW WILL YOU *STOP* ME, HUMAN? THERE IS *NOTHING* WHICH CAN STOP ME FROM PILOTING THIS ROCKET TO COUNTER-EARTH-- *NOTHING!*

WRONG.

SPROKK

RUNCH

THOR AGAIN! AM I CURSED TO BE PLAGUED BY THE FOOL *FOREVER--?!*

NO MATTER! I SHALL *DESTROY* HIM--JUST AS I SHALL DESTROY *ANYTHING* WHICH GETS IN MY WAY!

THE RAYS SIZZLE DOWN TO CHEW THE PACKED MACADAM, AND AGAIN MAN-THING FEELS THE OVERWHELMING HATE...

YET HE SENSES, TOO, THAT THE HATE WILL DO NOTHING TO SLOW DOWN THE GOLDEN HAIRED ONE...

NOTHING AT ALL.

...123
...122
...121...

THOU HAST DONE THY BEST, VILLAIN, TO WREAK HAVOC WHEREVER THOU HAST TREAD!

BUT NOW, FOR THE FINAL TIME-- *THOR SAYS THEE NAY!*

WHRAM

CAREFUL, THOR! HE'S TRYING TO SABOTAGE THE SATELLITE!

AYE, MORTAL, AND *MORE...*

HIS ESSENCE OF HATRED WOULD SABOTAGE THE VERY NOBILITY OF LIFE ITSELF!

...87... 86... 85...

THIS PLACE--WITH ALL ITS *MANY* ROCKETS AND MACHINES--ASPIRES TO A HIGH GOAL...

...PERHAPS THE HIGHEST MORTAL MAN HAST EVER KNOWN!

AND THOR WILL NOT STAND BY TO SEE IT PERVERTED TO EVIL ENDS!

JUST TRY TO STOP ME, THUNDER GOD--ONCE I HAVE SMASHED YOU INTO THE DUST!

FWUMP

...55... 54... 53...

THIS TIME YOU'RE DOOMED, THOR-- AS ALL OF YOUR KIND ARE DOOMED IN THE END!

AS A GOD, YOU SERVE AS AN IDEAL FOR ALL THE FINER INSTINCTS OF MEN...

...23...22... 21...

AND YET, WHEN THE *MOMENT OF TRUTH* ARRIVES, MAN'S FINER INSTINCTS EVER ALTER-- AND BECOME BASE! SO IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN-- AND SO IT SHALL BE! MAN IS AT HEART NO BETTER THAN A ***BEAST!***

AND I AM THE ***MAN-BEAST***--THE SUM TOTAL OF ALL THE COWARDICE AND TREACHERY AND HATRED THAT LURKS IN THE HEART OF MAN! I AM THE ***REAL AND TRUE IDEAL OF MAN!***

NAY, VILLAIN--NOT SO LONG AS THE COURAGE AND SACRIFICE AND NOBILITY OF A HIGHER PURPOSE BEATS IN THE HEART OF BUT A SINGLE MAN *OR* GOD!

SWOKK

FOOL! DON'T YOU ***UNDERSTAND?!*** HATE IS MY ***STRENGTH***--

--AND SO LONG AS I ***HATE*** YOU, I ***CAN NEVER*** BE BEATEN!

...16... 15... 14...

...10...9... 8...

MINE HAMMER-- MJOLNIR!

HURRY, THOR-- THE LAUNCH CAN'T BE ABORTED! YOU'VE GOT TO *STOP HIM!*

AYE, MORTAL-- AND STOP HIM THOR *SHALL!*

SPUNCH

...7...6...5...

BUT AT THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT--

FHWAM

...4...3... 2...

...1... ZERO.

THE HATCH-- 'TIS CLOSING!

LIFTOFF!

AND MINE HAMMER-- MJOLNIR IS STILL *INSIDE!*

AND NOW BEGINS A DIFFERENT KIND OF COUNTDOWN--A COUNTDOWN IN REVERSE...

16 17

...A COUNT UP TO SIXTY PRECIOUS SECONDS SPANNING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.

U.S. AIR FORCE

18 19

IF I DO NOT REGAIN MY HAMMER WITHIN THE SIXTY SECONDS ALLOTTED BY MY FATHER ODIN--

20

--I SHALL REVERT TO MY MORTAL FORM OF DR. DONALD BLAKE!

21

HE IS COMMITTED NOW.

U.S. AIR FORCE

THERE IS IS NO TURNING BACK.

22

AND BY THEN--

23 24

--THIS ROCKET WILL HAVE CARRIED ME INTO THE AIRLESS VOID OF *SPACE*...

THOR LEAPS FROM THE GANTRY, DESPERATELY STRIVING TO OVERTAKE THE RISING PILLAR OF FIRE...

... WHERE DONALD BLAKE CANNOT SURVIVE FOR EVEN A SINGLE HEART BEAT!

25

U.S. AIR FORCE

NO TURNING BACK.

26 27

HAH! FAREWELL, VILE EARTH!

AT LAST THE MAN-BEAST HAS TRIUMPHED -- AND SOON COUNTER-EARTH SHALL FEEL THE WRATH OF MY VENGEANCE!

28

NO HOPE...

U.S. AIR FORCE

...NOTHING IN FACT, SHORT OF A *MIRACLE.*

29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 39

EH--? THOR'S HAMMER!

EXCELLENT--NOW I HAVE BOTH A SOUVENIR OF PAST TRIUMPH AND A WEAPON FOR THE COMING CONQUEST!

IF ONLY THE MORTAL DIANE LAMARR WERE NOT INSIDE THE ROCKET--THEN I COULD MERELY *SMASH* MY WAY TO MJOLNIR...

WHAT THE --? NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRY, I CAN'T *LIFT* THE THING!

MUST BE... SOME KIND OF *MAGIC*... ATTACHED TO IT...

40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48

BAH! I HAVE NO *NEED* OF THE THING!

LET IT LAY!

'TIS HOPELESS --I CANNOT ACT WITHOUT ENDANGERING THE MORTAL!

AND SO, SHE HERSELF IS MINE ONLY HOPE...

BESIDES, IT'S TIME TO BYPASS THE CRAFT'S AUTOMATIC GUIDANCE SYSTEMS--

--SO I CAN ASSUME FULL CONTROL MYSELF!

HE'S SABOTAGING THE SATELLITE! GOT TO SEAL MY SUIT--ANCHOR MYSELF TO THE BULKHEAD...

...AND STOP HIM THE ONLY WAY POSSIBLE!

WHAT?! THE HUMAN FEMALE-- SHE'S STILL ABOARD THE CRAFT! I FORGOT ABOUT HER!

52 53 54

55 56

AND THE ONLY WAY POSSIBLE IS TO--

TEK

...57

--BLOW THE HATCH!

...58...

AN EXPLOSIVE ROAR RIPS THROUGH THE CAPSULE, AND THE PURGING OXYGEN SUCKS EVERYTHING MOVEABLE--URU HAMMER, MAN-BEAST, AND DIANE LAMARR HERSELF--TOWARD THE VAST VACUUM BEYOND THE BLOWN HATCH...

BUT THEN--

FOR A MOMENT, ANCHORED BY HER STOUT UMBILICAL LINE, DIANE FEELS THE GIDDINESS OF DARING SUCCESS...

...59...

...60!

NO! MY *LIFELINE*--IT *SNAPPED!* I UNDERESTIMATED THE VIOLENCE OF DEPRESSURIZATION!

MJOLNIR IS MINE! THE CHANGE TO MORTAL BLAKE HAST BEEN *AVERTED!*

AND SO, IN A WAY SHE CANNOT FATHOM--AND IN A WAY WHICH DOES HER LITTLE IMMEDIATE GOOD--DIANE LAMARR **HAS** SUCCEEDED.

--BUT THE MAN-BEAST HAST MANAGED TO GRIP THE SPACECRAFT'S HULL--

THE CURSED *THUNDER GOD* AGAIN--HE MUST HAVE BEEN CLINGING TO THE CAPSULE ALL ALONG!

--WHILE DIANE LAMARR HURTLES HELPLESSLY INTO SPACE!

BUT PERHAPS IT'S BETTER THIS WAY...FOR HOW CAN I TAKE SATISFACTION IN MY VENGEANCE ON COUNTER-EARTH--

--IF I'VE LEFT BEHIND UNSETTLED SCORES FROM *EARTH ITSELF?!*

NO! HE'S HURTING THOR--AND THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO TO HELP -- NO WAY TO GET *BACK THERE!*

AND NOW, IN TRIUMPH AND HATE, THE MAN-BEAST SHALL DELIVER THE *KILLING BLOW...*

BUT THE MIGHTY THOR IS FAR FROM READY TO FOLD AND DIE...

NAY! I WILL NOT PERMIT THIS BASE CREATURE TO PREVAIL--NOT WHILST THE PRIDE OF ASGARD YET COURSES THROUGH MY VEINS!

WHAT--? HE *RE-COVERED?!*

AND, IN HATE AND FURY, THE MAN-BEAST REDOUBLES HIS FIERCE ONSLAUGHT.

HE MUST BE USING THE BEASTLIKE CLAWS OF HIS FEET TO GRIP THE CRAFT'S HULL AND-- *WHAT?!*

NOW HE RIPS UP A SECTION OF THE CRAFT ITSELF--

--TO *HURL AT ME!*

ENOW, I SAY!

WITH EVERY MOMENT I TARRY IN BATTLE WITH THE MAN-BEAST--

--THE MORTAL DIANE LaMARR FLOATS FARTHER AND YET FARTHER FROM SALVATION!

'TIS TIME TO *END* THE CHARADE--

--NOW-- WHILST HE HAST SURRENDERED HIS GRIP ON THE *HULL*--

--BY STRIKING HIM WITH ALL THE FURY OF A *GOD ENRAGED!*

UHN!

NO--! HE *CAN'T* WIN! HE *CAN'T--!* MY VENGEANCE--HE CAN'T DENY IT *NOW!* NOT *NOW--!*

AND NOW, LET HIM SEEK HIS EVIL ENDS *WITHOUT* THE AID OF THIS SPACECRAFT...

NOT NOW... HE CAN'T CAN'T... CAN'T...

...WHILE *MY* CONCERN RESTS WITH YON INNOCENT DRIFTING INTO THE TERROR BETWIXT THE STARS...

FLY TRULY, MJOLNIR--

--AND CARRY US ALL SAFELY TO THE *END* OF THIS MATTER!

THE ENCHANTED MALLET STREAKS THROUGH THE ETERNAL DARKNESS, A SHINING MESSENGER OF HOPE FOR DIANE LAMARR...

... HOPE WHERE NONE SEEMED TO EXIST.

SHE REACHES UP AT THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT--

--AND GRABS--

--JUST BEFORE MJOLNIR MAKES ITS ORDAINED RETURN TO THE HAND OF ITS MASTER...

SIMILARLY, THOR STABS UP AT THE PASSING HAMMER--

--FILLING HIS HAND WITH THE FAMILIAR LEATHER-THONGED GRIP--

--AND BOTH MORTAL AND GOD RIDE MJOLNIR'S SUPERNATURAL POWER BACK TOWARD THE BECKONING ATMOSPHERE OF EARTH.

HE *DID* IT! THOR *SAVED* ME!

I THOUGHT IT WOULD TAKE A MIRACLE--BUT THOR *DID IT!!*

AT CAPE CANAVERAL, SHAKEN WORKERS AND TECHNICIANS SLOWLY RISE FROM THEIR LONG BOUT WITH MADNESS...

SATELLITE IN ORBIT--LAUNCH SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED.

WH-WHAT--? BUT HOW? WHAT *HAP-PENED?!*

THE EFFECTS OF THE MAN-BEAST'S HATE-RAYS HAVE WORN OFF.

THOR! AND THERE'S SOMEONE WITH HIM--AN *ASTRONAUT!*

AYE--'TIS DIANE LAMARR.

DIANE--?! BUT... BUT *HOW?!* I...I THINK YOU'D BETTER *EXPLAIN,* THOR...

AND, AFTER THE EXPLANATION HAS BEEN RENDERED...

THAT WAS A MIGHTY COURAGEOUS ACT YOU TOOK, MS. LAMARR.

YEAH--THAT SATELLITE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE UNMANNED, BUT IT SURE WASN'T "*UNWOMANNED*"!

YES... WELL, AT LEAST I MADE IT OUT INTO SPACE *ONCE*...

AND YOU'LL DO IT *AGAIN!*

WHAT? I... I... YOU MEAN--

BY JUPITER, AFTER WHAT YOU'VE DEMONSTRATED TODAY, WE COULD *NEVER* LET SOMEONE OF YOUR CALIBER LEAVE THE SPACE PROGRAM!

NASA

THIS WHOLE MATTER HAS MADE ME AWARE OF ONE OVERRIDING FACT WE TECHNOPHILES SOMETIMES OVERLOOK--*PEOPLE* ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT COMPONENTS OF *ANY* SYSTEM.

WE'LL FIND SOMETHING ELSE TO CUT.

AND DIANE BEAMS.

TH-THANK YOU, THOR... BUT NOW... IF YOU'LL ALL EXCUSE ME...

...I'D BETTER GO FIND A FRIEND I ABANDONED RATHER ABRUPTLY.

THANKS TO YOU, THOR, MAYBE SOME OF MY LUCK WILL RUB OFF ON *HIM*.

AND DIANE LAMARR HEADS ACROSS THE MACADAM, FEELING TEN FEET TALL.

IT'S BEEN A DAY SHE WILL NEVER FORGET...

BUT AS FOR THE MUCH ENCRUSTED *MAN-THING*--HE WHO IN MANY WAYS, HAS SERVED AS THE *CATALIST* FOR THIS DAY'S EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS...

...WELL, HE SIMPLY SHAMBLES OFF TOWARD THE SOOTHING SHADE OF A NEARBY CYPRESS GROVE...

...THE ENTIRE AFFAIR LOCKED SOMEWHERE DEEP IN THE DIM RECESSES OF HIS MURKY MIND--EFFECTIVELY *FORGOTTEN*.

NEXT ISSUE

THE ZANIAC CRAVES BLOOD!

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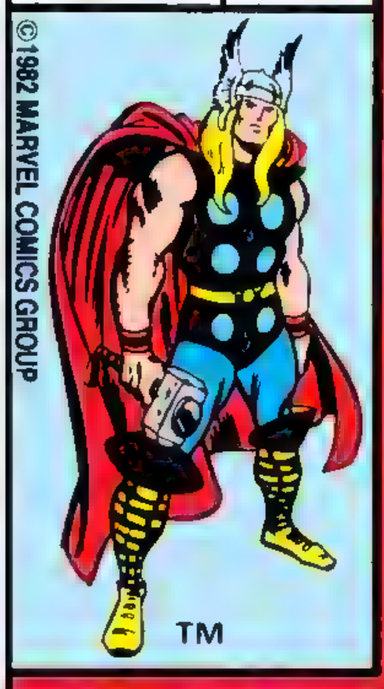

THE MIGHTY

THOR™

"A KINGDOM LOST!"

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR— and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning— and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

"EVEN WHEN A MERE YOUTH, ODIN'S FIRST AND FAVORED SON BOLDLY TROD A PATH OF GLORY. WITH HIS EVERY WORD AND DEED, HE CLEARLY DISPENSED HINTS OF WHAT WAS TO COME, SHAPING THE DESIGN AND DESTINY OF A THUNDER GOD NOBLY BORN.

"INDEED, YOUNG THOR FACED ALL MANNER OF ELEMENTAL EVIL-- ICE AND FIRE DEMONS, STORM GIANTS AND ROCK DRAGONS-- AND NEVER ONCE DID HE WAVER, NOR FALL IN DEFEAT.

A Kingdom Lost

DOUG MOENCH - WRITER
GIL KANE - ARTIST
DIANA ALBERS - LETTERER
GEORGE ROUSSOS - COLORIST
JIM SALICRUP - EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER - EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"FOR, YOU SEE, COURAGE AND NOBILITY ARE TRAITS WHICH MAY BE LEARNED... BUT WHICH KNOW NO AGE."

THEN ARE YOU SAYING, STORYTELLER, THAT SINCE *THOR* COULD ACCOMPLISH SUCH AWESOME FEATS AS A YOUTH... *WE* MAY DO THE SAME?

NAY, NOT THE SAME, FOR THERE IS NONE HERE IN ASGARD--NOR ANYWHERE ELSE--TO COMPARE WITH THE MATCHLESS POWER OF THOR.

BUT *SIMILAR* COURAGE MAY BE THINE, IF YE BUT TAKE THE EXAMPLE OF THOR TO THY HEARTS.

BUT EVIL SOMETIMES SEEMS TO BE SO MUCH *STRONGER* THAN THE POWER OF GOOD. WAS THERE *NEVER* A TIME, STORYTELLER--

--WHEN THOR WAS *DEFEATED* BY A FORCE OF EVIL?

NAY--NOT EVEN BY THE STRONGEST, MOST POWERFUL AND MOST DEVIOUS SOURCE OF EVIL ASGARD HAS EVER SEEN...

NOT EVEN THOR'S OWN BROTHER--THE INFAMOUS GOD OF MISCHIEF, *LOKI*-- HAS EVER DEFEATED THE THUNDER GOD. THEIR RIVALRY BEGAN WHEN BOTH WERE BUT STRIPLINGS AND HAS ENDURED TO THE PRESENT DAY...

...AND THOR HAS PREVAILED EVERY TIME.

NOR SHALL EVIL LOKI EVER WIN-- *NEVER!*

HEARING PRAISES SUNG TO MY HATED BROTHER IS BAD ENOUGH-- BUT NOW, THE OLD STORYTELLER'S FINAL PROCLAMATION IS TOO MUCH TO BEAR!

NEVER, EH? WE SHALL SEE ABOUT THAT, FOR I HAVE BEEN HATCHING A NEW SCHEME OF MISCHIEF FOR QUITE SOME TIME...

...AND NOW IS THE MOMENT TO GIVE IT BIRTH!

BUT FIRST I MUST VISIT THE LAND OF KARNILLA--THE NORN QUEEN!

AND, AFTER A JOURNEY COMPLETED WITH THE SWIFTNESS OF SORCERY...

WHAT BRINGS THEE, LOKI? ANOTHER SCHEME OF FOLLY?

A FAVOR DUE, KARNILLA--I'VE COME TO COLLECT.

ALL PAST DEBTS BETWEEN US WERE CANCELED, DEAR LOKI, AFTER YOUR SNOW GIANT SCHEME.*

*SEE THOR # 308. --JIM.

CALL IT A GAMBLE, THEN. GRANT ME A FAVOR, AND IF MY ENTERPRISE SUCCEEDS--

ONLY FIVE? AND DOES YOUR ENTERPRISE INVOLVE THOR, PERCHANCE?

AYE.

THEN THE FAVOR IS GRANTED.

--THOU SHALT BE REWARDED HANDSOMELY.

IT DEPENDS UPON THE FAVOR.

I HAVE A NEED FOR FIVE NORN STONES. THEY SHALL BE RETURNED.

BUT BEWARE THE STONES' AWESOME POWER, LOKI... AND EMPLOY THEM ONLY WITH THE GREATEST OF CARE.

AND WITH THE ENCHANTED NORN STONES IN HAND--

--LOKI EMBARKS ON THE NEXT STAGE OF HIS DIRE MISSION...

... A JOURNEY INTO DEATH ITSELF-- INTO THE BLEAK AND BARREN WASTES OF **NASTROND**, WHERE ONCE DWELT AN EVIL RACE WHO DARED DEFY THE ALL-FATHER ODIN HIMSELF.

IN HIS WRATH, MY FATHER LAID WASTE TO THIS ONCE-MAGNIFICENT KINGDOM, MAKING IT UNFIT FOR LIFE OF ANY KIND--AND THOUGH ODIN LATER ***RESTORED*** LIFE TO THE KINGDOM AT LARGE...

... THIS DARK CORE STILL REMAINS DEVOID OF ALL LIFE SAVE ONE--HE WHOM IS THE REASON FOR MY JOURNEY THROUGH A LANDSCAPE OF SUCH GLOOM AND FORBODING...

HERE IN THIS CAVERN, 'TWAS THE RAYS FROM YON SHINING POOL WHICH PRESERVED THE ONE LIFE IN ALL THIS LAND, PRESERVED AND ***ALTERED*** THAT LIFE...

... TRANSFORMING HIM INTO A HIDEOUS MOCKERY OF WHAT HE HAD ONCE BEEN...

... THE ***KING*** OF NASTROND HIMSELF!

WHO ***DARES*** INVADE MY REALM?

THY REALM, O ONCE-KING? AND WHERE IS THY PALACE? WHERE ARE THY SUBJECTS?

LOKI--? AYE, IT ***IS*** YOU! THEN YOU WELL ***KNOW*** WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO MY KINGDOM! IT WAS STRIPPED FROM ME BY YOUR FATHER--ACCURSED ODIN--AND LATER DENIED TO ME BY HIS OTHER SON, THOR! *

AYE, AND I'VE COME TO OFFER THEE VENGEANCE ON THOR. DOST THOU WANT IT?

*WAY BACK IN **THOR** # 134 & 135. --JIM.

AND A NEW KINGDOM AS WELL?

FOOLISH QUESTIONS, LOKI-- I'D DO ANYTHING FOR SUCH VENGEANCE AND A NEW KINGDOM TO RULE!

THEN STAND YE FAST AND PREPARE THYSELF FOR A JOURNEY OF SORCERY--

--A JOURNEY TO THE BASE, LOWER REALM OF *MIDGARD!*

TRANSFORMED TO BALLS OF SEETHING FIRE, LOKI AND HIS NEW COMPANION STREAK FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE DANK, DARK CAVERN...

... AND HURTLE FROM THE ENCHANTED PLATFORM OF ASGARD ITSELF--

--ENTERING A STRANGE DIMENSION OF TRANSIT BEYOND SPACE AND TIME.

FINALLY, AFTER A PASSAGE WHICH IS BOTH A TWINKLING AND AN ETERNITY, THE TWO SUPERNATURAL COMETS PIERCE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE ABOVE AN ISLAND IN THE PACIFIC...

AH! HERE IS MY DESTINATION--AND WHILE MY COMPANION CONTINUES ONWARD TO FINISH HIS JOURNEY IN MORE VIOLENT FASHION, IT IS HERE THAT I MUST PREPARE THE FIRST STAGE OF MY TRAP...

... THE NORN STONES--WHICH SHALL LIE DORMENT ON THE ISLAND, AWAITING THOR'S PRESENCE...

...THEIR SOR-CEROUS POWER TO BE AWAKENED ONLY BY MY ACCURSED BROTHER'S PROXI-MITY.

AND TO ***ENSURE*** THOR'S PRESENCE, TO ***LURE*** HIM HERE...

...THE ARRIVAL OF *MY COMPANION*...

...OR TO BE MORE PRECISE, THE ***AFTEREFFECTS*** OF THAT ARRIVAL.

THE COMET IMPACTS WITH THE SEA SO FORCEFULLY THAT TWO HUGE, TOWERING WALLS OF WATER ARE THROWN UP...

*...THE BEGINNINGS OF TSUNAMIS, KNOWN IN THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE AS **TIDAL WAVES**-- ONE OF WHICH NOW ROLLS TOWARD A DESTINATION CHOSEN BY LOKI.*

SHORTLY, IN THE MANHATTAN APARTMENT OF DR. DONALD BLAKE...

--TIDAL WAVE RUSHING STRAIGHT FOR EASTER ISLAND. AMERICAN MEDICAL EVACUATION UNITS ARE EVEN NOW AT THE SCENE--

--TRANSPORTING THE ISLAND'S 91 PERMANENT RESIDENTS TO SAFETY. IT IS NOT KNOWN WHAT THEIR CHANCES OF SUCCESS ARE...

AND WITH ALL THE OTHER AVENGERS OFF ON A MISSION--

--IT'S UP TO ME TO AID THE RESCUE ATTEMPT...

...OR UP TO MY ALTER-EGO, ANYWAY.

HE GRASPS HIS UNASSUMING WALKING STICK, ALREADY FEELING ITS SURGE OF UNIMAGINABLE POWER...

SLAMMING IT TO THE FLOOR, UNLOCKING THE MAGIC TRAPPED IN ITS MOLECULES--

BOOM

--DR. DONALD BLAKE DISAPPEARS IN A FLASH OF THUNDER AND LIGHTNING, REPLACED BY **THE MIGHTY THOR,** LORD OF STORMS.

THE WALKING STICK, TOO, HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED-- INTO THE MYSTIC URU HAMMER, **MJOLNIR.**

TOGETHER, THEY DEPART NEW YORK LIKE THE WIND.

AND SOON, ON EASTER ISLAND ITSELF...

LOOK! WHAT'S THAT UP IN THE SKY?!

IT'S... IT'S A **MAN!**

NO... NOT A MAN--**MORE** THAN THAT! IT'S **THOR!!**

NEED THOU AID, MORTAL?

UH... THESE PEOPLE ARE THE LAST TO GO, THOR--AND THE TIDAL WAVE'S STILL A FEW MILES OFF. WE'LL COMPLETE THE RESCUE ALL RIGHT, BUT...

BUT--?

WELL, IT'S JUST THAT...

YOU SEE THOSE STATUES, THOR? THERE'S NOTHING ELSE LIKE 'EM ON EARTH.

THIS ISLAND MUST'VE BEEN A GREAT KINGDOM ONCE, HOSTING AN ADVANCED RACE OF PEOPLE WHO WERE SOMEHOW SENT INTO DECLINE...

SO, OKAY, NOW THERE'S ONLY A RELATIVE HANDFUL OF PEOPLE HERE, AND WE'VE MANAGED TO SAVE THEIR LIVES...

...AND THOSE STATUES CAN PROBABLY WITH-STAND THE WATER-- BUT IT'D BE A REAL SHAME, DON'T YOU THINK, IF THEIR TOWN HAD TO BE WIPED OUT...?

I MEAN, BEING THE LAST VESTIGE OF AN ANCIENT KINGDOM AND--

THOU WISHES ME TO PRESERVE YON MEAGER DWELLINGS, MORTAL?

JUST AN IDEA-- BUT I GUESS WE DID OUR BEST...AND NOT EVEN A SUPER-GUY LIKE YOU COULD STOP A TIDAL WAVE IN FULL FURY...

YOU THINK NOT, MORTAL? THEN WITNESS YE THE POWER OF MIGHTY MJOLNIR!

HURLED WITH ALL THE VAST STRENGTH OF AN ASGARDIAN GOD, THE HAMMER PLOWS A FURROW STRAIGHT ACROSS THE ISLAND, DIGGING DEEPER AND EVER DEEPER--

--UNTIL A HUGE WALL OF EARTH AND ROCK IS THRUST UP ALONG ITS LINE OF PASSAGE.

IN AN INSTANT, THE PROTECTIVE WALL DIVIDES THE ISLAND, SEPARATING THE SEAWARD STATUES FROM THE INLAND TOWN.

AT THE FAR END OF THE WALL, MYSTICAL MJOLNIR TURNS 180 DEGREES, AND--

WOW! THE CRAZY HAMMER EVEN CAME BACK TO HIM-- SNAPPED RIGHT INTO HIS WAITING HAND!

YEAH, BUT STILL... I DON'T KNOW IF EVEN A WALL LIKE THAT CAN STAND UP TO THE SLAM OF A TSUNAMI...

THEN I STAND READY TO GIRD THE WALL WITH MINE OWN SINEWS AT WHATEVER POINT IT SHOULD WEAKEN...

HEY--C'MON, YOU GUYS! WE GOTTA GET THESE LAST FEW PEOPLE UP IN THE CHOPPER!

THAT WAVE'S GONNA HIT ANY MINUTE!

AND, WITH ONE LAST AWED LOOK AT THE THUNDER GOD, THE AMERICAN MED-EVAC CREW BOLTS FOR THE WAITING HELICOPTER...

ALL RIGHT, THAT IS THE LAST OF 'EM! LET'S HIT THE SKY!

YEAH, BUT DON'T HOVER *TOO* HIGH! WHATEVER THOR'S GONNA DO, I SURE WANNA SEE IT!

MOMENTS LATER, THE WAVE HEAVES INTO VIEW, LOOMING OVER THE ISLAND IN ROARING RAGE.

IT CRESTS, AND HITS WITH TERRIFYING FORCE--SWEEPING OVER THE BIZARRE, IMPASSIVE STATUES, UPROOTING AND TOPPLING THEM AS IF THEY WERE STRAWS STUCK IN SAND...

AND STILL THE WATER RUSHES ACROSS THE LAND, HEADING FOR THOR'S LINE OF DEFENSE...

THERE IS AN EXPLOSION, LIKE A THOUSAND BOLTS OF THUNDER, AS IT SLAMS INTO THE WALL... AND THE WALL STARTS TO BREAK...

BUT THE HEROIC THUNDER GOD IS THERE, HIMSELF A TITAN OF THE ELEMENTS --AND INCREDIBLY, THE SHORING WALL HOLDS...

...BUT JUST BARELY.

AND THEN THE WORST IS OVER, ABSORBED BY THE WALL OF EARTH AND ROCK.

THE MASSIVE WAVE BEGINS TO RECEDE...

...DISSOLVING THE WALL IN THE PROCESS, FLATTENING IT TO A MERE HUMP...

AND AS THE FURY OF THE WAVE EBBS BACK INTO THE SEA, THOR SEES THAT--

BY ODIN'S STAFF!

THE STRANGE STATUES HAVE BEEN PLUCKED FROM THE GROUND--!

AND THEY POSSESS *BODIES* BENEATH THE BROODING HEADS!

OKAY, THE WAVE'S GONE--WE CAN SET THE CHOPPERS BACK DOWN NOW.

YEAH, BUT I STILL DON'T BELIEVE WHAT WE JUST SAW--WHAT THOR *DID!*

THESE PEOPLE WANT TO THANK YOU, THOR. YOU SAVED THEIR TOWN... AND IT'S ALL THEY'VE GOT...

THY GRATITUDE IS COMFORTING, MORTALS, BUT MISPLACED.

FOR, HE WHO POSSESSES THE POWER TO DO GOOD--

--IS BOUND BY THE DIGNITY OF CONSCIENCE TO EXERCISE THAT POWER.

NOW, I SHALL SEE IF I CAN RIGHT YON STATUES INTO THEIR PROPER POSITIONS.

WOW. Y'KNOW... THAT'S THE KIND OF CORNINESS WE COULD USE BY THE TRUCKLOAD IN THIS WORLD.

AT FIRST, HIS EYES FIRMLY SET ON THE STATUES AHEAD--

-- THOR DOES NOT NOTICE THE NORN STONES AT HIS FEET.

BUT AS HE PASSES... THE STONES BEGIN TO GLOW...

...AND THE SINISTER FIRES RADIATING FROM THEM CATCH THE PERIPHERY OF HIS VISION.

EH--? THESE GLOWING STONES... BUT WHAT MANNER OF--?

NORN STONES--OF THE SAME TYPE WHICH ONCE CONFERRED MYSTICAL POWERS TO A WITCHDOCTOR WHO CALLED HIMSELF THE DEMON...

THEN THE HAND OF ASGARDIAN SORCERY IS AT WORK HERE. BUT WHO COULD HAVE--?

...THEY'RE COMING TO LIFE!!

AYE--AND THEIR EYES EMANATE SOME FORM OF DESTRUCTIVE BEAM!

BEHIND YOU, THOR!! THE *STATUES!* THEY...

THE NORN STONES' DOING, NO DOUBT--

THRAKK

--AND SEEMINGLY TRIGGERED BY MY PRESENCE...

YET THEIR THREAT IS AT BEST MINOR...

THROKK

THE DESTRUCTIVE BEAMS MIGHT WELL ENDANGER A MORTAL'S FORM--BUT TO ME THEY ARE A MERE ANNOYANCE...

AND THE STATUES THEMSELVES ARE BUT MERE LUMBERING GIANTS, ALL SIZE AND NO STRENGTH OR SPEED--QUICK TO RETREAT FROM THE ONSLAUGHT OF MINE HAMMER!

AND NOW THEIR MOVEMENTS GROW EVEN MORE STIFF-- AS I DRIVE THEM FARTHER AND FARTHER FROM THE INFLUENCE OF THE NORN STONES!

AYE, THEY ARE NEARLY RIGID AGAIN-- LIKE UNTO THE DEAD STONE THEY IN TRUTH ARE!

'TWILL BE AN EASY MATTER TO END THIS GAME, THEN...

FRAKT

...BY HAMMERING THEM BACK INTO THE GROUND WHENCE THEY CAME!

AND AS THOR POUNDS THE LAST OF THE WEIRD STATUES DEEPLY INTO THE EARTH...

KRAKT

...THE GLOW IN THEIR EYES FADES TO COLD STONE.

KNOW YE THE *SOURCE*, MORTAL, OF THE EARLIER TIDAL WAVE?

T-TIDAL WAVE--? AFTER WHAT JUST HAPPENED WITH THOSE STATUES COMIN' TO LIFE--GEEZ, I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE I SAW IT-- YOU'RE WORRYING ABOUT THE TIDAL WAVE--?

THE SORCERY THOU HAST JUST WITNESSED, MORTAL, HAS NOT YET RUN ITS FULL COURSE --AND IT IS IN SOME WAY LINKED TO THE TIDAL WAVE!

I CANNOT END THE DANGER LEST YE TELL ME THE *SOURCE OF THE WAVE!*

O-OKAY... TAKE IT EASY, THOR... IT... IT MUST'VE BEEN A SUBSEA EARTHQUAKE THAT CAUSED IT...

OUT THERE, TO THE NORTH. ON THE WAY IN FOR THE RESCUE WE PASSED AN ISLAND THAT ISN'T EVEN ON THE CHARTS...

WE THOUGHT WE WERE LOST FOR A MINUTE, BUT THE ISLAND MUST'VE BEEN PUSHED UP BY AN EARTHQUAKE--AND THE VIOLENT SURFACING MIGHT'VE CAUSED THE WAVE...

... BUT I STILL DON'T BELIEVE WHAT I SAW... DON'T KNOW IF I EVER WILL... SORCERY... STATUES THAT WALK...

BUT THOR IS ALREADY GONE...

...TO ARRIVE, BRIEF MOMENTS LATER, AT--

THE ISLAND!

AND YON CAVERN--A PERFECT HAUNT FOR EVIL...

ENGAGED, NOW, BY WHAT HE PERCEIVES TO BE YET ANOTHER ASGARDIAN INTRUSION INTO THE AFFAIRS OF EARTH, THOR ENTERS THE CAVERN IN HASTE, ALL CAUTION LEFT OUTSIDE.

HIS SUSPICIONS ARE CONFIRMED ALMOST IMMEDIATELY AS HE CONFRONTS--

LOKI!

AGAIN YOU PROVE THAT THY EVIL KNOWS NO BOUNDS!

THE TRAP HAS WORKED SOONER THAN EVEN I EXPECTED, BROTHER-- BUT THEN, I ASSUMED THE STATUES WOULD ONLY SLOW THEE DOWN.

THE REAL TRAP IS LAID HERE IN THIS ISLAND GROTTO I HAVE RAISED FROM THE SEA...

LONG AGO OUR FATHER ODIN STRIPPED A KING OF HIS POWER AND KINGDOM.

LATER, YOU DEFEATED THAT SAME KING, THOR--AFTER HE HAD BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO A MONSTROSITY BY THE SINISTER RAYS OF A SHINING POOL.

THE KING, UNDERSTANDABLY, NOW LUSTS FOR VENGEANCE...

YOU SPEAK OF THE KINGDOM OF NASTROND, AND--

AYE, MY HATED BROTHER THOR-- AND ITS ONCE-KING-- *FAFNIR THE DRAGON!*

SO, LITTLE GOLDEN-HAIRED GOD... YOU HAVE TAKEN LOKI'S BAIT... ONLY TO BE CAUGHT BY *ME!*

FOR THE SINS OF THY FATHER, AND THY OWN SINS--

--THOU SHALT *PERISH!*

HRAHHH

NOW LET THE MINSTRELS AND STORYTELLERS OF ASGARD SING THY PRAISES, MY BROTHER-- FOR ERE THIS DAY IS DONE, A *NEW* SONG SHALL ADORN THEIR TONGUES --A SONG OF *MOURNING!*

HA HA HA

MY PAST HAS BEEN STOLEN, LITTLE GOD-- STRIPPED FROM ME!

HWAKT

I HAVE LOST MY KINGDOM--MY POWER--MY GLORY!

I HAVE LOST MY AUTHORITY TO RULE! AND MOST OF ALL, I HAVE LOST MY *FORM,* MY *BODY,* MY *FACE*-- LOST IT TO THE HIDEOUS FORM OF A DRAGON!

ALL THIS BECAUSE OF YOU, THOR-- BECAUSE OF YOU AND YOUR-ACCURSED FATHER *ODIN!*

AND NOW, OUTSIDE THE CAVERN, UNDER THE DYING SUN'S EMBER GLOW, THE THE DRAGON-KING FAFNIR CLOSES ON HIS VENGEANCE...

BUT NOW, AT LAST, HERE ON THE NEW KINGDOM LOKI HAS GRANTED ME, I WILL TAKE MY REVENGE--

--BY SLAYING HATED ODIN'S FIRST AND FAVORED SON!

NAY, FAFNIR! NONE MAY DARE QUESTION THE JUDGMENT OF ALL-FATHER ODIN! HIS WORD IS LAW! HIS JUDGMENT *JUST!*

OR HAST THOU FORGOTTEN THAT THY KINGDOM WAS EVIL AND CORRUPT--THAT THY CRUEL REIGN *DESERVED* TO BE ENDED?!

WHAT?! YOU ARE STILL ABLE TO MOVE--STILL ABLE TO *FLEE* FROM ME?!

NAY, FAFNIR--

--TO *STRIKE BACK AT THEE!!*

SPOOM

OR HAST THOU ALSO FORGOTTEN THE RESULT OF THY *FIRST* ATTEMPT AT REVENGE? I DEFEATED THEE-- JUST AS I SHALL DEFEAT THEE *NOW!*

JUST AS I SHALL DEFEAT THEE EVERY TIME YE RAISE THY FOUL HEAD FROM THE MIRE OF *INIQUITY!*

AND THE DRAGON FALLS TO THE HARD SURFACE OF HIS NEW KINGDOM.

NO! HE'S BEATING YOU, FAFNIR! 'TIS TIME I TOOK A DIRECT HAND IN THE BATTLE--AND MAYHAP THE TWO OF US MAY YET WIN THE DAY!

NAY, BROTHER LOKI--IT HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH AS IT IS!

AND SO SAYING, THE THUNDER GOD CALLS UPON HIS BIRTHRIGHT TO SUMMON A STORM...

LIGHTNING--? THINKEST THOU A MERE STORM CAN DEFEAT LOKI AND FAFNIR THE DRAGON-KING?!

WAIT, LOKI--IN HIS HAND!

THE NORN STONES?! NO--!!

AYE, LOKI, THY WORST FEAR IS TRUE--THEIR POWER IS NOW MINE!

THOR CASTS THE STONES HIGH INTO THE DARKLING SKY, WHERE THEY HOVER SUSPENDED...

THEN, DIRECTED BY HIS URU HAMMER, A BOLT OF LIGHTNING LEAPS DOWN TO HIT THE STONES...

THE LIGHTNING IS THEN FOCUSED THROUGH THE STONES, BECOMING A CRACKLING FIELD OF SORCEROUS ENERGY WHICH BINDS FAFNIR AND LOKI AT ITS HEART...

AND NOW, BASE VILLAINS--

STAY THY HAND, LORD OF STORMS. THOU HAST DONE THY PART WELL...

...NOW 'TIS TIME FOR A STRONGER HAND TO TAKE CHARGE.

MY FATHER-- GLORIOUS ODIN-- APPEARING HERE ON MIDGARD!

STAND YE ASIDE, MY SON, THAT MY JUDGMENT MAY FALL DIRECTLY UPON THE ADJUDGED!

THOU HAST MADE A GRAVE ERROR, FAFNIR, FOR ALL THIS COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED.

YE HAD BUT TO PETITION ME FOR A SECOND CHANCE. INSTEAD, YE CHOSE THE BASE PATH OF VENGEANCE...

FOR THIS I BANISH THEE BACK TO THE BLEAK CORE OF THY FORMER KINGDOM, THERE TO LANGUISH ETERNALLY IN THY PRESENT FORM!

AS FOR THEE, MY OTHER SON... THOU HAST ONCE AGAIN SERVED ME GREAT SHAME AND GRIEF.

WILT THY EVIL NATURE NEVER SEEK A GOLDEN BEND IN THE PATH?

P-PLEASE, FATHER-- 'TWAS BUT A PRANK-- THE MEREST OF JESTS!

I THINK NOT, LOKI.

AND SO MUST YE ALSO RETURN TO ASGARD--TO AWAIT FITTING PUNISHMENT AGAIN.

NOW, THOR, YE MAY RESUME WHATEVER DESTINY YE SEEK ON THY ADOPTED HOME OF MIDGARD...

BUT KNOW THAT, FROM TIME TO TIME, MY SON, THE EYE OF ODIN IS UPON THEE.

AND WITH HIS FINAL WORDS ECHOING LIKE THE RUMBLE OF DISTANT THUNDER, THE IMAGE OF ODIN FADES INTO THE MESH OF LIGHTNING... LEAVING THOR'S SOUL STIRRED, AND GLADDENED.

SO IT MUST BE... FOR THE ALL-KNOWING FATHER OF ASGARD HAST SPOKEN.

EPILOGUE: *ON EASTER ISLAND, SEVERAL HOURS LATER, THE STORM HAS CLEARED...*

CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT--ALL OF A SUDDEN THERE WAS A STORM, AND WHEN IT BROKE THE STATUES WERE ALL BACK IN THEIR PROPER PLACES...

MUST'VE BEEN THOR-- TAKING MY LITTLE SPEECH ABOUT PRESERVING A KINGDOM TO HEART...

YEAH--NO ONE ELSE COULD'VE DONE IT... BUT I STILL CAN'T FIGURE WHERE THAT DOCTOR CAME FROM, BECAUSE ***WE*** SURE DIDN'T BRING HIM.

CALLS HIMSELF BLAKE-- MAYBE HE WAS HERE AS A TOURIST OR SOMETHING...

ANYWAY, HE'S SURE TAKEN A GOOD CHUNK OF THE LOAD OFF ***OUR*** SHOULDERS. HE'S DONE THE WORK OF ***THREE*** MEDICS.

WHEN HE'S DONE, THE LEAST WE CAN DO IS GIVE HIM A LIFT BACK TO THE STATES...

POOR GUY'S LAME HIMSELF-- **USES** A WALKING STICK.

YEAH... AIN'T IT FUNNY HOW THE ONES WHO SEEM THE WEAKEST SO OFTEN TURN OUT TO BE THE ***STRONGEST?***

YEAH. FUNNY.

END

HEIMDALL--

BROTHER OF SIF AND GUARDIAN OF THE RAINBOW BRIDGE-- WHOSE HYPER-ACUTE SENSES KEEP ETERNAL VIGIL OVER THE HOME OF THE GODS. WHEN THE FORCES OF EVIL THREATEN, HEIMDALL PUTS THE GJALLARHORN TO HIS LIPS TO SOUND THE CALL TO ARMS!

FIRST APPEARANCE: JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY #85.

HERMOD--

YOUNG MESSENGER OF THE GODS, WHOSE FLEETNESS IS UNMATCHED IN ALL THE REALM!

FIRST APPEARANCE: THOR #275.

GODS and GODDESSES of ASGARD

SPECIAL BONUS FEATURE

WRITTEN BY GRUENWALD & MACCHIO-
ART BY KEITH POLLARD-LETTERS BY JOHN COSTANZA-COLORS BY D.WARFIELD

FANDRAL
THE DASHING... AS SKILLED WITH HIS BLADE AS HE IS WITH THE LADIES!
VOLSTAGG
THE VOLUMINOUS GREAT IN STATURE, APPETITE, AND DISCRETION!
HOGUN
THE GRIM... DOUR IN COUNTENANCE, FIERCE IN BATTLE!
BANDED TOGETHER, THEY ARE KNOWN AS THE
WARRIORS THREE,
A TRIO OF MIGHTY HEROES WHO THOR COUNTS AS HIS MOST TRUSTED FRIENDS.
FIRST APPEARANCE: JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY #119.

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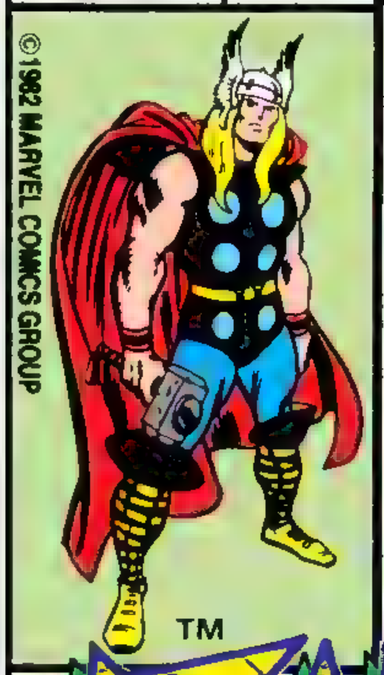

THE MIGHTY

THOR™

THE ZANIAC CRAVES BLOOD!

pollard

YOU MAY HATE HIS NAME--BUT YOU'LL NEVER FORGET HIM!

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR— and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning— and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

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THE ZANIAC CRAVES BLOOD!

CHICAGO: THE WINDY CITY, CROSSROADS OF THE NATION, THE CITY THAT WORKS, LOCATION OF THE WORLD'S BUSIEST AIRPORT AND TALLEST BUILDING, AND HOME OF SOME EIGHT MILLION SOULS...

THOR'S KIND OF TOWN.

'TIS INDEED WINDY HERE-- DOUBTLESS FROM ITS LOCATION ON THE SHORES OF THE GREAT BODY OF WATER CALLED LAKE MICHIGAN...

... BUT THE WIND DOTH ADD A CERTAIN FRESHNESS TO THE CITY--A HARDY ZEST FOR LIFE.

AYE--AMONGST ALL THE OTHER GREAT CENTERS OF MORTAL LIFE, 'TIS A MAGNIFICENT PLACE INDEED!

HARDLY COULD IT COMPARE WITH THE SHINING SPIRES OF ETERNAL ASGARD--

--BUT UNLESS MINE EYES ARE BLINDED BY THE MERE NOVELTY OF CHANGE--

--I CANNOT SEE WHY IT SHOULD PLACE SECOND TO NEW YORK.

THE STREETS AND AVENUES ARE WIDER AND SEEM SOMEHOW BRIGHTER AND CLEANER...

NOT THAT IT BE *TOTALLY* BEREFT OF HUMAN FILTH AND WASTE...

LIKE ANY MORTAL CITY, IT HAS ITS DARK SIDE--AYE, AND NO DOUBT FULL MEASURES OF MEANNESS AND MISERY.

BUT NOW, 'TIS TIME TO MEET SHAWNA LINDE FOR THE FINAL LECTURE OF THE PHYSICIANS' SEMINAR...

...A LECTURE TO BE GIVEN BY--

BOOM

DOCTOR DONALD BLAKE.

--SO IN CONCLUSION, WE IN THE PROFESSION OF MEDICINE AND HEALING MUST ALWAYS TREAD A FINE LINE.

ON THE ONE HAND WE MUST TAKE CARE TO ***NEVER LOSE THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PATIENT,*** NO MATTER HOW SEVERE OR HOPELESS THE CONDITION MAY BE.

BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, IF WE HAVE INDEED TAKEN THE PLACE OF THE TRIBAL SHAMAN--THE INFALLIBLE WITCH-DOCTOR--IN THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS OF OUR SOCIETY...

...THEN WE MUST ALSO TAKE GREAT PAINS NOT TO FALL VICTIM TO THE FALSE POWERS INVESTED IN US BY THAT SUBCONSCIOUS PERCEPTION.

IF WE ARE UNCERTAIN OR IGNORANT, WE MUST ADMIT IT--EVEN AT THE RISK OF LOSING CONFIDENCE.

FOR WE ARE NOT GODS, BUT MERE MORTAL MEN FULLY CAPABLE OF MISTAKES.

THANK YOU AND GOOD EVENING.

THE AUDIENCE OF GATHERED PHYSICIANS BURSTS INTO SPONTANEOUS APPLAUSE.

CONGRATULATIONS, DON! AFTER ALL THOSE STUFFY TECHNICAL TALKS, THEY LOVED YOUR RETURN TO BASICS.

THANK YOU, SHAWNA --I JUST HOPE IT WAS IMPORTANT ENOUGH.

IS DINNER STILL ON, DOCTOR?

IT MOST CERTAINLY IS, DOCTOR.

GOOD-- I KNOW A PLACE JUST AROUND THE CORNER.

SHAWNA, DO YOU REALLY THINK THEY APPRECIATED IT?

YOU HEARD THE APPLAUSE, DON?

YES, BUT IT REALLY ***WAS*** BASIC. DO YOU THINK IT JUSTIFIED THE EXPENSE OF FLYING ME OUT HERE AND--

ANY TALK WHICH REMINDS US OF OUR HUMANITY--OF WHAT ALL OUR TECHNICAL WONDERS SOMETIMES MAKE US FORGET--IS MORE THAN WORTH IT.

965

Chez Paris

WELL, I JUST HOPE IT WAS--

IT WAS. NOW ***ORDER.***

Chez Pierre

YOU'VE BEEN HERE FOR TWO WEEKS NOW, DON. HOW DO YOU LIKE IT? THE CITY I MEAN, NOT THE SEMINAR.

I LIKE IT VERY MUCH INDEED.

YOU KNOW, DON, JUST BECAUSE THE SEMINAR IS ENDING, YOU DON'T HAVE TO LEAVE. YOU SAID YOU'D CLOSED YOUR NEW YORK PRACTICE--I COULD HELP YOU ESTABLISH A NEW ONE HERE, REFER PATIENTS TO YOU...

I'VE THOUGHT OF IT MYSELF SHAWNA--THE CHANGE MIGHT DO ME A WORLD OF GOOD--BUT I THINK I NEED MORE TIME TO MAKE A FINAL DECISION.

AND, AS THEY LEAVE THE RESTAURANT, THE THOUGHT STILL PREYS ON HIS MIND...

I'D LIKE IT HERE AS BLAKE, BUT THOR MIGHT BE MORE NEEDED IN NEW YORK...

CARE TO TAKE A STROLL, DON? I COULD SHOW YOU HYDE PARK...

UH, FINE--I'D LIKE THAT.

AND SO...

HERE'S THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, DON--STILL A PRESTIGIOUS SCHOOL.

YES, IT HAS THE REPUTATION OF BEING THE HARVARD OF THE MIDWEST, WHERE SOME OF THE WORLD'S FINEST MINDS MATRICULATE...

NOT TO MENTION BEING THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE ATOM BACK IN THE FORTIES...

THAT'S RIGHT--PROJECT MANHATTAN WAS CONDUCTED UNDER THE BLEACHERS OF THE STADIUM.

STRANGE THEY CALLED IT MANHATTAN WHEN IT ACTUALLY TOOK PLACE HERE IN CHICAGO.

HMM, LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE SHOOTING A MOVIE ON CAMPUS. EVER SINCE THE CITY DECIDED TO MAKE ITSELF AVAILABLE FOR LOCATION SHOOTING, MAYOR BYRNE HAS ENCOURAGED IT...

...BOTH FOR P.R. REASONS AND THE REVENUE IT PUMPS INTO THE CITY'S ECONOMY. WE'VE HAD A FLOOD OF FILMS RECENTLY--STEVE McQUEEN IN "THE HUNTER"--"BLUES BROTHERS"--"THE FURY"--"THIEF" WITH JAMES CAAN--"CONTINENTAL DIVIDE"...

BRAD WOLFE ON SET! WHERE *IS* HE? WHERE'S MY *STAR*--?

THAT'S YOUR CUE, BRAD, AND YOU KNOW HOW DIRECTORS GET WHEN--

TELL HIM I'M NOT READY YET--GOT TO GET MY MAKEUP ON.

BUT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE MADE UP HOURS AGO! EVERY MINUTE OF CREW-TIME COSTS US--

I KNOW, I KNOW. I JUST HAD TO PSYCH MYSELF UP.

OKAY, STEVE, DO YOUR ART.

YOU BET, BRAD--YOUR FACE IS MY CANVAS.

I AM AN ESCAPED LUNATIC. THE ASYLUM WAS TORTURE. I WAS PUT THERE FOR THE MASS MURDER OF FOURTEEN CHEERLEADERS.

I HATE ALL WOMEN, ESPECIALLY PRETTY ONES. WHEN I WAS A CHILD MY MOTHER MISTREATED ME. I REMEMBER THE DARKNESS OF THE CLOSET.

AND THE HATE THAT BUILT INSIDE THAT CLOSET, THE HATE THAT WOULD SOMEDAY EXPLODE.

AND NOW I'M OUT OF THE CLOSET, OUT OF THE ASYLUM, AND THE HATE MUST EXPLODE AGAIN.

ALL THE PRETTY-PRETTIES MUST DIE. THE ZANIAC CRAVES BLOOD! THE ZANIAC--

HEY, AREN'T YOU TAKING THIS ROLE TOO SERIOUSLY, BRAD? IT'S JUST ANOTHER CHEAPO STALK AND SLASH HORROR FLICK.

MAYBE-- BUT IT'S ALSO MY BIG CHANCE, STEVE, AND I'VE GOT TO LOSE MYSELF COMPLETELY IN THE ROLE...

IF I DO GOOD AS THE ZANIAC--

--IF I'M TOTALLY CONVINCING--

--IT COULD BE MY STEPPING STONE TO BIGGER ROLES, BETTER PARTS!

THAT'S WHY I'VE GOT TO PSYCHE MYSELF UP, GOT TO TRULY BELIEVE THAT I AM THE ***ZANIAC***-- AND THE ***ZANIAC CRAVES BLOOD!***

WHAT'S KEEPING WOLFE? THESE DELAYS ARE KILLING US-- EVERY MINUTE OF CREW-TIME COSTS EIGHT THOUSAND DOLLARS!

WE DIDN'T HAVE THESE PROBLEMS WITH "HAPPY DEATHDAY TO YOU" OR "SORORITY SCREAMS"...

PART OF THE JOB, MR. CRONENKING. JUST IMAGINE WHAT CARPENTER AND ROMERO HAVE TO PUT UP WITH.

YEAH, BUT-- *HEY!*

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WHAT *IS* THAT?!

EXPLOSIVES FOR THE CAR CRASH IN THE NEXT SCENE...

DANGER

WHAT?!

THE NEXT SCENE IN THE *SCRIPT,* YOU IDIOT, NOT ON TONIGHT'S *SHOOTING SCHEDULE!* DO YOU REALLY THINK THEY'D AUTHORIZE AN EXPLOSION HERE ON *CAMPUS?!*

IT HAS TO BE DONE NEXT WEEK OUT IN THE COUNTRY AND *MATTED-IN!*

OH WELL, WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH--

I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU DO WITH THEM--JUST GET THEM *OUT* OF HERE!

PUT 'EM UNDER THOSE BLEACHERS THERE OUT OF CAMERA RANGE!

R-RIGHT, MR. CRONENKING.

GO GET 'EM, BRAD!

I AM THE ZANIAC! THE ZANIAC CRAVES BLOOD!

DON'T BELIEVE ALL THAT JAZZ ABOUT METHOD-ACTING. THERE'S *ANOTHER* REASON HE'S SO PSYCHED-UP...

YEAH? WHAT?

"HE IDENTIFIES WITH THE PART. Y'SEE, HE HAD A SIMILAR CHILDHOOD HIMSELF."

ALL RIGHT, THIS IS THE SCENE WHERE YOU CHASE THE LUSCIOUS CO-ED ACROSS THE CAMPUS. JUST WAVE YOUR BUTCHER KNIFE AND LOOK AWFUL.

OF COURSE, CRONIE--I'M THE *ZANIAC,* AIN'T I?

HOW 'BOUT OUR LUSCIOUS CO-ED? YOU READY?

READY, MR. CRONENKING, UNLESS YOU THINK MY DRESS ISN'T TORN ENOUGH OR--

IT'S FINE, BABE.

EDDIE, KEEP THOSE PEOPLE BEHIND THE BLEACHERS! TAKE ONE! SPEED... SOUND ACTION...

...ROLL 'EM!

EEEEE

RUN, PRETTY-PRETTY, *RUN!* BUT YOU'LL NEVER ESCAPE THE *ZANIAC!*

STUPID MOVIES THESE DAYS -- NOTHIN' BUT TRASH.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO TRACY AND HEPBURN?

HMP--SURE DON'T MAKE 'EM LIKE THEY USED TO.

EX

DANGER

IT MAY NOT BE GREAT ACTING, SHAWNA, BUT IT *IS* FAIRLY CONVINCING.

ENOUGH TO GIVE *ME* THE CREEPS, DON.

AND SINCE THIS IS HARDLY THE TYPE OF MOVIE I'D *PAY* TO SEE, WE MIGHT AS WELL WATCH IT FREE FOR A WHILE...

NO! STOP IT! LEAVE ME ALONE!

NOT *THIS* WAY--YOU'RE SCARING ME! YOU'RE *REALLY* SCARING ME!

AND YOU SCARED *ME,* PRETTY-PRETTY-- ALL THOSE HOURS LOCKED IN THE CLOSET--ALL THOSE YEARS IN THE HOME...!

WHAT ARE THEY DOING?! THEY'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO RUN TOWARD THOSE *BLEACHERS!* IT'LL BRING ALL THE GAWKERS INTO CAMERA RANGE!

I BELIEVE BRAD CALLS IT IMPROVI-SATION.

IMPROVISATION...

EXPLOSIV

NGER

...AND FATE.

FATE IS STRANGE, SOMETIMES EVEN SINISTER.

THE LOCALE WAS CHOSEN DELIBERATELY, OF COURSE, FOR ITS VISUAL APPEAL--FOR ITS "SUPURB EVOCATION OF AN OLD-STYLE UNIVERSITY," AS THE COST-ACCOUNTING SHEET PUT IT SO QUAINTLY

IT IS ONLY A COINCIDENCE THAT THIS WAS ALSO THE SITE OF A MOMENTOUS "BIRTH" SOME THIRTY-FIVE YEARS PAST.

ONLY A COINCIDENCE THAT THIS RELATIVELY MINOR EXPLOSION ECHOES THE WITHERING LEGACY OF MUSHROOM BLASTS SPAWNED BY PROJECT MANHATTAN UNDER THIS VERY GROUND.

AND ONLY A COINCIDENCE THAT THE FANTASY OF FILM WILL SOON BE DWARFED BY A NIGHTMARE OF REALITY...

WHAT, INDEED, HAS BECOME OF TRACY AND HEPBURN? WHAT INDEED HAS BECOME OF THE WORLD?

THE SPECTATORS, AMONG THEM DOCTORS BLAKE AND LYNDE, ARE THE LUCKY ONES...

THEY SUFFER MERE INJURY AND OBLIVION.

BUT FATE HAS A SPECIAL DESTINY FOR THE **STAR** OF ITS DRAMA--ONE STRANGE EYE ON BRAD WOLFE, AND THE OTHER SINISTER EYE ON SOMETHING CALLED THE **ZANIAC**.

I AM AN ESCAPED LUNATIC! THE ASYLUM WAS TORTURE!

BERSERK NOW, CATCHING THE FULL BRUNT OF THE BLAST BUT SOMEHOW REMAINING CONSCIOUS, HE HURTLES INTO THE FLAMES.

THE HATE MUST EXPLODE!

AND STUMBLES THROUGH UNEARTHLY HEAT RISING FROM BROKEN GROUND.

ALL THE PRETTY-PRETTIES, MUST DIE!

FINALLY HE HALTS, WRAPPED IN A LINGERING TRACE OF WHAT WAS ONCE EUPHEMISTICALLY CALLED "HEAVY WATER"...

...REVISITED BY THE LONG-DEAD GHOST OF URANIUM.

THE EXPLOSION, YOU SEE, HAS TRULY FREED THE HATE AND FATE'S TWO MASKS, STRANGE AND SINISTER, NOW INTERACT AROUND AN UNBALANCED CORE NAMED BRAD WOLFE.

I AM THE ZANIAC!!

MY KNIFE--IT'S GONE! BUT I *MUST* HAVE A KNIFE!

HE CLOSES HIS FIST AROUND A CONVICTION OF FIRE, BURNING IN HIS MIND AND AND HEART.

HE BELIEVES IN THE RIGHTNESS OF THE BLADE, IN ITS STARK INEVITABILITY...

...AND, ETCHED IN THE FLICKER OF RADIATION--

--IT IS **SO.**

HIS HATE, REBORN, IS NOW READY...

...AWAITING ONLY ITS VICTIM.

YOU... THE PRETTY-PRETTY WHO TRIED TO ESCAPE ME...

WH-WHAT--? N-NO...!

BUT THE ACTRESS IS GONE, HURLED CLEAR BY THE EXPLOSION...

...AND DR. SHAWNA LYNDE, HER CLOTHING NOW TORN MUCH LIKE THE "LUSCIOUS CO-ED'S, "RISES IN TERROR.

NO--! DON'T BE INSANE! STAY *AWAY* FROM ME!

HE...HE'S GONE *CRAZY!* THAT EXPLOSION DID SOMETHING TO HIM!

YEAH .. HE... HE SEEMS *BIGGER*... ALMOST *REAL*...

HE'S GOING AFTER THAT WOMAN!

STOP HIM!

THE KNIFE, RESERVED FOR PRETTY-PRETTIES, DISAPPEARS INSTANTLY.

THESE MEN ATTACKING HIM ARE ANYTHING BUT PRETTY, AND HE HAS KNOWN THEIR KIND BEFORE.

THEY ARE UGLY AND, RATHER THAN THE REFINEMENT OF THE KNIFE, THEY DESERVE NOTHING MORE THAN THE BLUNT FORCE OF HATE!

I...I DON'T BELIEVE IT! HE'S LIKE A *BULLDOZER!* HE'S GOT THE STRENGTH OF *FIFTY MEN!*

NOW, MY PRETTY CO-ED...

NO! LET *GO* OF ME!!

...YOUR BLOOD SHALL RUN RED IN THE NEAREST ALLEY!

DAZED, VISION BLURRED, BLAKE FINALLY REVIVES...

SHAWNA--!!

DID YOU HEAR WHAT HE *SAID*?! ABOUT THE *ALLEY*?! THAT WAS THE NEXT LINE OF DIALOGUE IN THE SCREENPLAY! HE'S LIVING OUT THE MOVIE *FOR REAL!*

CALL THE COPS, EDDIE! TELL 'EM WE GOT A DISASTER HERE--AND SOME WOMAN'S BEEN KIDNAPED!

GOT TO GET OUT OF SIGHT--!

--CHANGE TO THOR!

BOOOM

AND NOW... AS BLAKE I WAS UNCONSCIOUS THROUGH MUCH OF WHAT HATH TRANSPIRED...

BUT AS THOR THE MIGHTY, LORD OF STORMS AND SCION OF ASGARD--

--I SHALL BE CONSCIOUS OF WHATEVER EVIL MAY FOLLOW! AND THIS I VOW...

NO HARM SHALL BEFALL THE MORTAL SHAWNA LYNDE!

AND, BY THE MYSTIC POWER OF MJOLNIR--THE ENCHANTED URU HAMMER WHICH HAS REPLACED BLAKE'S WALKING STICK-- THOR TAKES TO THE SKY...

...RISING TO A GODLY HEIGHT FROM WHICH NOTHING IS HIDDEN BY THE CONCRETE CONSTRUCTS OF MAN...

THERE--IN YON ALLEY BELOW--MINE OBJECTIVE IS CLEAR!

YOU ARE WOMAN, PRETTY-PRETTY, AND IN YOUR PRETTY FACE IS THE MASK OF ALL WOMEN...

...SCHEMING EVIL HIDING BEHIND THE FALSE BEAUTY...

...AN EVIL OF SIREN MADNESS WHICH MUST NOW--

NAY, VILLAIN! 'TIS *THOU* WHO ART EITHER MAD OR EVIL!

THOOM

AND WHETHER MAD OR WICKED, YE MUST NOW FACE THE FURY OF THOR!

MJOLNIR FLIES, STRIKING WITH THE FORCE OF A THUNDERBOLT...

...THEN SNAPS BACK, AS EVER, INTO THOR'S WAITING HAND.

SHAWNA LYNDE...

THOU ART SAFE NOW.

AND SO IT WOULD SEEM...

...FOR ANY **NORMAL** MORTAL SO STRUCK BY MJOLNIR WOULD LIE STILL FOR HOURS.

WHAT?! A PRETTY-PRETTY...WHO IS **NOT**?

BUT THE ZANIAC, FATE HAS DECREED, IS NO LONGER NORMAL.

LONG GOLDEN HAIR... LIKE SO MANY OF THE OTHERS...

BY ODIN'S BLOOD--!!

OOOPH!

...BUT **NOT** LIKE THEM AT ALL!

YOU WEAR A MASK TOO! YOU'RE ONE OF THE UGLY ONES--WEARING THE LONG HAIR OF A PRETTY-PRETTY!

YOU DESERVE *BOTH,* THEN--THE KNIFE OF LOVE *AND* THE BLUNT STRENGTH OF HATE!

STRENGTH--AYE, THY STRENGTH IS VAST, VILLAIN...

INDEED, THOU HAST SURVIVED MJOLNIR'S TELLING BLOW...

...BUT REJOICE NOT IN THY VICTORY YET--

--FOR NOW YE MUST FACE THE FULL POWER OF *THOR HIMSELF!*

KROPT

BUT AGAIN THOR IS TAKEN BY SURPRISE--

SPOOM

--UNABLE TO CONCEIVE OF ANY MORTAL, NORMAL OR NOT, POSSESSING POWER AND STAMINA SUCH AS THIS!

THERE IS THE MOAN OF APPROACHING SIRENS AND--AS IN THE FILM--THE ZANIAC FLEES...

SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY OCCURRED WHILST BLAKE WAS UNCONSCIOUS--THAT MUCH IS CLEAR, THOUGH THE NATURE OF IT REMAINS A MYSTERY. WOULD THAT I COULD PURSUE HIM--

--BUT I MUST FIRST ATTEND THE MORTAL WOMAN...

THOUGH I HAVE FAILED IN MY FIRST MEETING WITH THY ATTACKER, SHAWNA LYNDE--

--I SPOKE TRULY WHEN SAYING THAT THOU ART SAFE.

THE POLICE WILL NOW ATTEND THY NEEDS...

...WHILST I SEEK A *SECOND* MEETING WITH THIS *ZANIAC*.

YOU ALL RIGHT, MA'AM?

I... I'M NOT SURE... IT'S ALL LIKE A... A BAD DREAM...

A BAD DREAM--OR THE FANTASY OF A BAD HORROR FILM.

HANDS SHAKING... STILL DON'T BELIEVE WHAT--

MR. CRONENKING--LOOK! IT'S *THOR!*

WHO--?!

THOU SAID HE WAS "LIVING OUT THE MOVIE." WHAT TRANSPIRES *NEXT* IN THY TALE?

N-NEXT--? UH... NEXT WOULD BE... UH... THE SCRIPT! GIVE ME THE *SCRIPT,* SONDRA!

L-LET ME SEE... THAT'D BE SCENE 123 NEAR THE END HERE... WHERE HE... UH... *OH NO!* OF COURSE-- HOW COULD I FORGET?! IT'S THE SET-PIECE OF THE WHOLE FILM!

N-NEXT HE... TAKES OVER THE *HOME FOR WOMEN* IN THE LOOP...

THEN HE... HE FORCES ALL THE WOMEN UP ONTO THE ROOF WHERE HE... WHERE HE...

"... K-KILLS THEM."

HERE IS THE WARREN WHERE THEY HIDE...

... THE PLACE WHERE ALL THE PRETTY-PRETTIES THINK THEY ARE SAFE FROM THE ZANIAC!

BUT THEY'RE *WRONG!*

BRAAATH

WHAT IN THE--?!!

HE MUST'VE USED A CAR TO RAM THROUGH THE DOORS!

NO, UGLY ONES...

THE ZANIAC NEEDS NO CAR! THE ZANIAC NEEDS *NOTHING--!*

NOTHING BUT THE NIGHTMARE OF *HATE!*

UHN!

NOW FOR THE PRETTY-PRETTIES... SO INNOCENT, SO TREACHEROUS... TRAPPED IN THEIR ROOMS... GETTING READY FOR SLEEP...

...A *LONG* SLEEP... A SLEEP OF *FOREVER*... OF DARKNESS DEEPER THAN THE CLOSET!

THE SHRIEKS RIP FROM ONE WOMAN TO THE NEXT--

--AND THE COLLECTIVE SOUND BECOMES A THING ALIVE, THE FRENZIED BREATH OF THE BEAST CALLED TERROR.

RUN PRETTY ONES-- TO THE ROOF--AND TO THE SLEEP OF FOREVER!

AND, STREAKING HIGH ABOVE THE NIGHTED CITY...

THERE! THAT PORTION OF THE CITY KNOWN AS "THE LOOP"--

--SO NAMED BECAUSE 'TIS GIRDED BY A ROUGH CIRCLE OF ELEVATED TRAIN TRACKS...

THERE AWAITS THE HOME FOR WOMEN...

"... AND THE MADMAN WHO SEEKS TO PREY ON THEM."

THE HATE MUST EXPLODE AGAIN! ALL THE PRETTY-PRETTIES MUST DIE! THE ZANIAC CRAVES BLOOD!

N-NO! IT... IT'S LIKE SOME AWFUL MONSTER MOVIE!

THE ZANIAC REMEMBERS THE DARKNESS OF THE CLOSET, AND HATES IT! THE ZANIAC--

--MUST *HALT*, VILLAIN, LEST YE FACE THE WRATH OF *THOR!*

IT'S THOR! HE'S COME TO SAVE US! IT'S ALL SO UNREAL! THIS BETTER NOT BE A JOKE!

STAND YE BACK, VILLAIN! THOU ART *NOT* THE ZANIAC! THOU ART MERELY *MAD*--

--AND, IN TRUTH, THOU ART THE ACTOR *BRAD WOLFE!*

NO! BRAD WOLFE DIED IN THE DARKNESS! HE'S GONE!

I AM THE ZANIAC!!

AND, TO PROVE IT, HE HURTLES FORWARD, MADLY--

WUMPP

RAKT

--DRIVING THOR FROM THE ROOF IN A WILD TUMBLE OF BRICK AND AND MORTAR...

...SO THAT BOTH HERO AND VILLAIN SLAM TO THE ELEVATED TRAIN TRACK TWO STORIES BELOW.

MY KNIFE--!

HEED WISDOM, MADMAN, AND END THY STRUGGLE WITH THE LOSS OF THY WEAPON--

--ERE A TRAIN AND ALL ITS INNOCENT PASSENGERS ARE IMPERILED BY THY FURY!

NO!!

I WANT MY KNIFE!!

AND, ALMOST MAGICALLY, IT APPEARS IN A SEETHING NIMBUS OF FIRE...

NOW, UGLY ONE--YOUR PRETTY MASK SHALL BE *CUT AWAY!*

HIS POWERS TRANSCEND ALL REASON, AND THERE CAN NOW BE NO DOUBT! THEY *MUST* CONFER FROM SOME PHENOMENON OF RADIATION!

AND IF TRACES OF URANIUM OR SOME OTHER SUBSTANCE REMAINED DORMANT AT THE SITE, THEN THEY HAVE NOW *COMMINGLED* WITH THE EXPLOSION--

--AND HAVE GIVEN BIRTH TO A *NEW* NIGHTMARE!

THROK

AS SHAWNA LYNDE POINTED OUT, THE SITE OF THE EXPLOSION LAY OVER THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE ATOMIC BOMB...

BAUWWWW

LOOK OUT! I CAN'T STOP IN TIME!!

YON TRAIN! IF IT SHOULD COLLIDE WITH ME--OR E'EN WITH THE ZANIAC...!

NAY! I MUST PREVENT IT BY THE ONLY MEANS POSSIBLE!

KREEK-K-K

ROARRRR

DID... DID YOU SEE WHAT HE JUST *DID*?!

IT STILL RIDES THE RAILS, ITS PASSENGERS SAFE.

AND NOW...

YAHRRR!

AGAIN HE STRIKES--

--AND AGAIN I AM FORCED TO DEFEND MYSELF AGAINST A MADMAN WITH NO CARE FOR HIS OWN FLESH!

WUMP

SWUM!

IT...IT'S INSANE! HE CAN'T BE HURT-- CAN'T BE STOPPED!

NO? JUST WAIT, HELEN-- THOR WILL THINK OF *SOME THING*...

I TRIED TO STOP YOU WITHOUT MY KNIFE!

IT WAS A MISTAKE!

AND SO, THE PRETTY-PRETTIES--

--YOU MUST FALL BY THE BLADE!

ONE AFTER ANOTHER, THEY FLY...

SHORT OF SLAYING HIM, MY POWERS ARE USELESS IN STOPPING HIM!

AND SO I MUST RESORT TO HIS OWN UNCANNY POWERS...

...USING WHIRLING MJOLNIR TO FOCUS THEM THROUGH THE METAL OF THE TRAIN RAIL--TO CONDUCT THEM *BACK* AT HIM!

DON'T YOU UNDER-STAND?! THE ZANIAC CRAVES BLOOD! THE ZANIAC--

AHRRRGHH!

THE RADIATION IMPLODES--AND, AT ITS FIERY HEART, THE ZANIAC FINALLY FALLS SILENT...

...THEN FALLS SILENTLY...

...UNTIL --

KRUMPP

HE DID IT! THOR DID IT!!

I TOLD YOU, HELEN! I TOLD YOU THOR WOULD FIND A WAY!!

AYE... BUT THE SEARCH WAS ONE I CARE NOT TO REPEAT...

EPILOGUE:

HAVING ASCERTAINED THE SAFETY OF THE SHAKEN WOMEN ON THE ROOF, THOR HAS TRANSFORMED BACK TO DR. DONALD BLAKE. AND NOW, IN THE GRIM SHADOWS OF THE EL TRACKS...

PULSE IS STEADY... IF SLOW...

AMBULANCE

HE'LL LIVE, BUT HE SHOULD BE TREATED FOR RADIATION POISONING AND CLOSELY OBSERVED FOR SIGNS OF ANYTHING UNUSUAL.

YEAH? AND WHO'RE YOU-- A DOCTOR?

GROCERY

BERARDI GROCERY

42

WHY, YES, I'M--

DON! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!

FINE, SHAWNA. AND YOU?

WEAK BUT WONDERFUL-- *NOW*. DID YOU HEAR, DON? THOR WAS HERE!

YES... I EVEN SAW HIM, SHAWNA. QUITE A FELLOW...

THEN ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL, DON--BUT AFTER THE WAY I'VE BEEN BOOSTING OUR TODDLIN' TOWN, I HOPE THIS EXPERIENCE HASN'T SOURED YOU IN CHICAGO...

IT HASN'T-- THINGS LIKE THIS CAN HAPPEN ANYWHERE, SHAWNA...

AND AS FAR AS CHICAGO GOES, I'VE DECIDED IT'S A FINE PLACE...

YOU *MEAN* IT, DON?

IS THIS ANYPLACE TO WHISTLE DIXIE?

BUT BLAKE HAS LEARNED MORE THAN HE'S LETTING ON...

IF ANYTHING, THIS EXPERIENCE PROVES THAT THOR IS NEEDED JUST AS MUCH HERE AS IN NEW YORK--OR ANYWHERE ELSE.

YES, I THINK I'VE FOUND MYSELF A NEW HOME... AND I THINK I'M GOING TO LIKE IT.

NEXT ISSUE

ONE OF THE STRANGEST AND MOST STARTLING THOR TALES EVER TOLD--A DELIGHTFULLY DARK FUSION OF FEAR AND FANTASY WE CALL...

BLAKE'S MENAGERIE!

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THE MIGHTY THOR™

TM

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR— and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning— and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard....

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

BLAKE'S MENAGERIE

BEYOND INFINITY, AT THE FAR SPAN OF THE RAINBOW BRIDGE CALLED BIFROST, AND EVER GUARDED BY VALIANT HEIMDALL, THERE LIES THE SHINING REALM OF ASGARD--ETERNAL HOME OF THE GODS.

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O GOLDEN REALM, O REALM OF ECSTASY,
WHERE THE PLUMED BIRDS WHEEL
IN THE BLOOD RED NIGHT, O LOVE,
TONIGHT, TONIGHT
WE SHALL DRINK FROM FORBIDDEN FOUNTAINS.

COME WITH ME.
LET US RIDE THE BACK OF THE DRAGON,
PULL DOWN THE MOON AND THE STARS;
LET US ENTER THE INFINITE DARKNESS,
AND PARTAKE OF VIOLENCE DIVINE.
--OLD NORSE POEM

AND IN THE PRIVATE QUARTERS OF HE WHO RULES OVER ALL OTHER NORSE GODS, IT CAN BE SEEN THAT NOT EVEN ALL-FATHER ODIN IS ABOVE THE CARES AND TROUBLES OF MORTAL MEN. INDEED, IF MORTAL MAN IS IN TRUTH BORN OF THE GODS, THEN SUCH CARES AND TROUBLES BEGAN IN ASGARD AND, IF ANYTHING, ARE HERE MANIFESTED ON A FAR GREATER SCALE...

YE CAN SEE, VIZIER-- 'TIS AS I FEARED. THE TROUBLE IN THE OUTLYING REGIONS HAS BREWED YET ANOTHER CONFLICT...

TELL ME AGAIN, VIZIER -- WHY MUST ASGARD BE PLAGUED WITH ETERNAL STRIFE?

AS THOU HAST EVER TOLD ME, ALL-FATHER, 'TIS THE WAY OF LIFE. FIGHTING AND DYING IS THE ONLY WAY TO GAIN ENTRANCE TO VALHALLA--

--THE ETERNAL REWARD FOR HAVING LIVED AND DIED FOR A JUST CAUSE.

YET TWO SIDES FIGHT, VIZIER. WHO DETERMINES WHICH SIDE SERVES THE JUST CAUSE?

AS EVER, ALL-FATHER... *THOU.*

AYE, AS EVER YET THIS TIME THE JUDGMENT IS COMPLICATED BY FEELINGS NORMALLY BEYOND MY CONCERN...

...FOR ONE FACTION FIGHTS UNDER THE BANNER OF THEIR UNWED QUEEN...THE FAIR JOLENA.

AFTER SO MANY BITTER SEASONS... SO MANY LONG YEARS... AFTER INFINITY ITSELF--

--HER BEAUTY IS UNFADED, ADORNING HER FACE AND FORM LIKE THE FIRST FRESH BUDS OF A NEVER-ENDING SPRING... AND 'TIS ENOW TO SET A GOD'S HEART AFIRE.

HOW TO MAKE ***THIS*** JUDGMENT, VIZIER... IN THE WINTER OF MINE HEART... IN THE FACE OF SO MANY MEMORIES... AND OF A LOVE WHICH WAS FAR TOO SHORT WHEN IT MIGHT WELL HAVE BEEN... FOREVER.

IF THOU WILT EXCUSE THE INTRUSION ON THY THOUGHTS, ALL-FATHER, THE JUDGMENT NEED NOT BE MADE NOW... AND THY QUEEN AWAITS THEE...

MY QUEEN, YES... SHE WHO IS DUTY ITSELF... MY WIFE AND MY LOVER... SHE WHO HAS REARED MY FAVORED SON THOR...

THOR-- HE WHO NOW STRIDES THE LOWER REALM OF MIDGARD IN THE GUISE OF A MERE MORTAL...

I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND, DON, BUT THE VIKING EXHIBIT IS LEAVING CHICAGO NEXT WEEK, AND SINCE I'M TAKING THE DAY OFF...

NOT AT ALL SHAWNA-- IT SHOULD PROVE INTERESTING.

BUT ONCE INSIDE THE FIELD MUSEUM, DR. DONALD BLAKE FINDS HIMSELF ANYTHING BUT ABSORBED...

CONSIDERING WHO I REALLY AM, THIS EXHIBIT SHOULD AT LEAST MAKE ME HOMESICK... BUT I GUESS I'M JUST TOO HAPPY ABOUT THE WAY MY NEW LIFE HERE IN CHICAGO IS SHAPING UP.

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE I NO LONGER HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THE FUTURE OR--

IT SAYS HERE, DON, THAT THIS SILVER CHALICE BELONGED TO ONE OF THE GODS--AND WAS USED TO DRINK A FORM OF WINE WHICH SOME NORSE SCHOLARS CLAIM WAS RELATED TO THE BLOOD OF MORTALS.

THE CHALICE WAS SUPPOSEDLY CAST DOWN TO MIDGARD, THE NORSE TERM FOR EARTH, WHEN--

BUT YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY GETTING INTO THIS, ARE YOU, DON?

EH--? OH, SORRY, SHAWNA, WHAT WERE YOU SAYING?

ANXIOUS TO OPEN YOUR NEW PRACTICE, AREN'T YOU DOCTOR?

YES, DOCTOR, I GUESS I AM A LITTLE EXCITED ABOUT SEEING MY FIRST PATIENT THIS AFTERNOON...

THEN YOU WIN-- LET'S GO. MAYBE I CAN SQUEEZE IN A LONGER VISIT ON SATURDAY.

THEN...

...SOMETHING FLICKERS FROM THE CHALICE...

BUT ONLY BRIEFLY-- AND IF ANY OF THE OTHER MUSEUM-GOERS HAVE EVEN NOTICED, THEY ATTRIBUTE IT TO A TRICK OF THE LIGHT, GLINTING OFF THE POLISHED SILVER.

OF COURSE. WHAT ELSE--?

MICHIGAN AVENUE'S "MAGNIFICENT MILE"...

THANKS FOR TAKING THE DAY OFF TO HELP ME, SHAWNA...

PROFESSIONAL COURTESY, DOCTOR --LAWYERS HANDLE EACH OTHERS' DIVORCES, DON'T THEY? BESIDES, WHAT ARE OLD MED SCHOOL CHUMS FOR?

BUT I MUST ADMIT, DON, I'VE DONE GOOD BY YOU-- A FINE BUILDING IN A GREAT LOCATION.

WELL, AFTER LIVING HERE SO LONG, YOU OUGHT TO KNOW THE CITY. WHAT I LIKE BEST IS THE APARTMENT ADJOINING THE OFFICES --NO COMMUTING.

AH! MY OFFICE FURNITURE HAS ARRIVED.

JUST SET THE CHAIRS ANYWHERE, MEN--IF I DON'T LIKE THE ARRANGEMENT, I'LL CHANGE IT AROUND LATER.

OH, HELLO?

DR. BLAKE? I'M HERE FOR THE INTERVIEW ABOUT THE NURSE POSITION.

AND SO, WHILE SHAWNA ORGANIZES THE RECEPTION FILES, THE JOB INTERVIEW IS CONDUCTED IN BLAKE'S NEW INNER OFFICE...

TELL ME, MISS STEVENS, HOW MUCH NURSING EXPERIENCE HAVE YOU HAD?

WELL, I WAS WITH ILLINOIS MASONIC HOSPITAL FOR TWELVE YEARS, DOCTOR, AND THEN... AND THEN... UH... OH, MY... I SUDDENLY FEEL A BIT DIZZY... SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR EYES, DOCTOR...

MY EYES--?

YES... AND I THINK I FEEL A CHILL COMING ON--IT'S FREEZING IN HERE...

REALLY? ACTUALLY, I WAS FEELING A BIT WARM, MISS STEVENS...

WARM? OH WELL, PERHAPS YOU'RE RIGHT.

WHAT A CURIOUS SENSATION...

K-K-K

...ALMOST LIKE BEING REBORN.

AYE, I'VE BEEN REBORN, BY YMIR'S BEARD! AFTER SO LONG A TIME!

WH-WHO... WH-WHAT... H-HOW--?!

HOW, I KNOW NOT, DR. BLAKE, THOUGH IT MUST NEEDS CONCERN THY PIERCING EYES. AYE, THEY CONTAIN A DEPTH OF EONS, SECRETS UNGLIMPSED FOR SO LONG...

AS FOR WHO AND WHAT, I AM FAIRGOLD--RIMTHURSAR'S MERMAID OF GOLDEN SCALES. 'TIS WARM IN HERE, AND DRY--HAVE THEE A MAGIC POOL PERCHANCE, OR A FORBIDDEN FOUNTAIN?

NO, I... WAIT A MINUTE! THIS IS INSANE! WHO IS RIMTHURSAR AND--

TOK TOK TOK

DON, YOUR FIRST PATIENT HAS ARRIVED. SHALL I SEND HIM IN?

UH, YES... I MEAN NO! ASK HIM TO WAIT A MOMENT, WOULD YOU, SHAWNA?

GOT TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE!

'FRAID I'M NOT TOO STRONG, BUT--

NAY, DOCTOR, I SENSE THOU ART EXCEEDINGLY STRONG. INDEED, THOU HAST AN ALMOST UNTAPPED INNER STRENGTH. BUT REMEMBER--I NEED WATER.

HERE, THE THERAPEUTIC WHIRLPOOL--IT'S BRAND NEW! YOU CAN'T ***STAY*** HERE, OF COURSE, BUT AT LEAST IT'LL KEEP YOU WET UNTIL I GET RID OF MY FIRST PATIENT...

OOOH, IT TICKLES!

JOIN ME IN THY MAGIC POOL, DOCTOR. I WILL SHOW THEE AN ECSTASY UNDREAMED--

FLUSTERED, BLAKE PULLS FREE JUST IN TIME...

THIS IS CRAZY! BUT I CAN'T LET IT HAPPEN--NOT NOW!

CAN'T LET LET IT RUIN MY NEW PRACTICE BEFORE IT'S EVEN BEGUN!

AH, MR. KIRBY?

YES, DOCTOR--THORNE KIRBY. I NEED HELP--

UH, I'M SORRY, BUT NOT TODAY, MR. KIRBY--SOMETHING'S COME UP AND I'M NOT QUITE READY TO SEE PATIENTS YET...

B-BUT I HAVE A PROBLEM, DOCTOR, AND NO OTHER DOCTOR IN TOWN CAN GET RESULTS. TH-THAT'S WHY I CAME TO YOU. I F-FIGURED YOU'RE A NEW DOCTOR FROM NEW YORK AND YOU SAID OVER THE PHONE--

YES, DON, WHAT'S WRONG? YOU WERE SO EAGER TO SEE YOUR FIRST PATIENT, AND NOW--

SAY... IS IT CHILLY IN HERE?

AGAIN: INSTANT FREEZE.

BLAKE GROANS IN DESPAIR AND DISBELIEF...

...AND WHEN THE RIMEFROST THAWS...

AT LAST-- I'M CURED! AND BOY, DOES IT FEEL GREAT! AYE, I ALWAYS KNEW THERE WAS MORE TO ME THAN A MEEK WEAKLING!

BUT HOW LONG IT HAS TAKEN--!

AYE, GRULT, 'TWAS LONG AGO THAT OUR BLOOD WAS SO IG-NOMINIOUSLY SPILT--AND AND BY OUR KEEPER, NO LESS!

BUT NOW THE SHAME OF IT IS BURNED AWAY BY THE JOY OF NEW LIFE!

SHAWNA... MR. KIRBY... IT... IT CAN'T BE--!

WHAT IN THE--?!

HEY! WE'RE FREEZIN'--!

OH NO...! NOT THEM TOO!

DON'T TELL ME--IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME, RIGHT?

HUH? WHAT'RE YA TALKIN' ABOUT, DOC? ARE YOU--

WAIT... AYE... AYE, BY RIM-THURSAR'S TREACHERY, A LONG TIME IT *HAS* BEEN!

INDEED.

AND SLITHGARN HISSES A LONG, LUXURIOUS SIGH.

WOULD THAT IT HAD BEEN MUCH LONGER IN *THY* CASE, BORNA THY FILTHY KNAVE!

GRULT! THOU ART HERE TOO? CURSE THE FATES!

UHHH... YOU DON'T *LIKE* EACH OTHER?

STOP IT YOU HEAR ME?! *STOP!!*

THOOM

'TIS NO USE, DOCTOR! GRUNT AND BORNA HAVE LOATHED EACH OTHER'S BONES SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME ITSELF!

BUT YOU'VE *GOT* TO STOP THEM! THEY'LL BRING THE POLICE! I... I CAN'T BE DISCOVERED WITH A... MENAGERIE OF MYTHOLOGICAL BEASTS ON MY HANDS!

EH--? WHY *NOT?* WE WERE GOOD ENOUGH FOR RIMTHURSAR!

AYE--IN THE BEST MENAGERIE OF THE AGES!

BAM BAM BAM

THE DOOR! YOU'VE GOT TO HIDE!

THE MORTAL SPEAKS SENSE--IF HE IS TO BE OUR KEEPER ON THIS STRANGE WORLD, WE MUST DO NOTHING TO JEOPARDIZE HIS STANDING, ELSE HE'LL BE NO GOOD TO US.

NAY, KYRIE-- I'VE LOST TOO MUCH LIVING! I'LL NOT BE CONFINED AGAIN!

PLEASE, GRULT... DON'T DESTROY WHAT I'VE JUST BEGUN TO BUILD...

OH, ALL RIGHT... BUT ONLY IF YE PROMISE TO LET US OUT LATER.

ANYTHING! BUT JUST GET OUT OF SIGHT NOW!

I COULD CHANGE TO THOR AND DEAL WITH THEM, I SUPPOSE, BUT AT THIS POINT IT'D PROBABLY LEAD TO NOTHING BUT A BRAWL...

BESIDES, THEY MAY RETAIN SOME OF THEIR HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS --AND I CAN'T VERY WELL LET SHAWNA AND THE OTHERS KNOW I'M REALLY THOR...

OH--IT'S YOU, MR. LYNX.

I, UH, WAS MOVING SOME NEW OFFICE FURNITURE AND--

YEAH, ME--YOUR *LANDLORD.* WHAT'S GOIN' ON IN HERE, BLAKE? SOUNDED LIKE A HERD OF BULLS.

YEAH? AND WHAT ABOUT THE DENTIST DOWNSTAIRS COMPLAINING ABOUT THE LEAK IN HIS CEILING?

LEAK--? THE WHIRLPOOL! I... I'LL SHUT IT OFF, MR. LYNX! MY FIRST DAY HERE-- HAVEN'T QUITE ACCLIMATED, YOU SEE...

YEAH, I SEE. THE INK AIN'T EVEN DRY ON YER LEASE AND ALREADY YOU'RE ITCHIN' TO GET BOUNCED!

NO! NOTHING UNSEEMLY WILL HAPPEN AGAIN, I ASSURE YOU!

IT BETTER NOT, BLAKE! ONE MORE PIECE O' TROUBLE OUTTA YOU AND YOU'RE OUT-- UNNERSTAND?

YES, OF COURSE, BUT UH... IS IT *CHILLY* FOR YOU?

NOW HE'S COMPLAININ' ABOUT THE HEAT! A FORTUNE IN OIL WE SPEND AND HE COMPLAINS ABOUT THE HEAT!

WHEW--GUESS HE WAS TOO HOT UNDER THE COLLAR FOR IT TO TAKE.

LATER, IN BLAKE'S NEW APARTMENT ADJOINING HIS OFFICES...

AYE, NOW WE'LL HAVE SOME REAL FUN, BY YMIR--NOW THAT WE'RE ALL HERE!

THERE'S ONE TOO MANY HERE, GRULT, IF YE ASK ME!

JUST HOW MANY OF YOU *ARE* THERE?!

THE MENAGERIE OF RIMTHURSAR IS FIVE, DOCTOR, AND *WE* ARE THOSE FIVE. NOW COME INTO THE ECSTASY OF MY ARMS AND--

FIVE. THEN AT LEAST THE MAILMAN IS SAFE-- THANK HEAVEN FOR *THAT.*

NOW--YOU SAY YOU KNOW HOW YOU CAME TO POSSESS THE BODIES OF FIVE HUMANS HERE ON EARTH?

AYE, WE KNOW.

THEN YOU *ALSO* KNOW HOW TO *LEAVE--?*

AYE, DOCTOR, THAT WE ALSO KNOW-- BUT WE CANNOT *TELL* THEE.

HAVE YE NO CONCEPTION OF THE SACRIFICE IT WOULD BE-- AFTER ENDURING THE SUSPENSION OF OUR LIVES FOR SO MANY EONS?

AYE-- TO DRINK THE LUSTY WINE OF REAL LIFE FOR A MERE PITTANCE OF HOURS, THEN TO RETURN SO QUICKLY TO A COLD EXISTENCE? NEVER!

BUT YOU *CAN'T* STAY HERE! YOU'VE USURPED THE LIVES OF FIVE PEOPLE! THINK OF THEM! THIS WORLD IS NOT FOR YOU!

BUT IT *IS* FOR YOU, DON? YOU OVERLOOK ONE POINT-- WE *KNOW* WHO WE ARE. FOR EXAMPLE, I AM SHAWNA LYNDE, DOCTOR. YOU AND I WENT TO MED SCHOOL TOGETHER.

I WAS ENTIRELY HAPPY AS SHAWNA LYNDE-- --BUT I MUST ADMIT, I'M EVEN HAPPIER IN MY PRESENT FORM AS KYRIE. YOU CAN'T IMAGINE THE FEELING OF HEIGHTENED LIFE, DON... OR *CAN* YOU?

WHAT ARE YOU GETTING AT--?

THAT YOU ARE MORE THAN YOU APPEAR-- AND THIS WILL PROVE IT!

KYRIE! SHAWNA--!!

ON SHEER INSTINCT, BLAKE SLAMS DOWN HIS WALKING CANE.

BOOM

AND, IN THUNDER--

--HE TRANSFORMS TO THOR THE MIGHTY, SON OF ODIN AND LORD OF STORMS.

THEN KYRIE WAS RIGHT ABOUT HIM!

THOR STREAKS DOWN ON THE SIDE OF THE BUILDING --BUT THEN, JUST AS HE IS ABOUT TO OVERTAKE KYRIE MERE FEET ABOVE THE HARD PAVEMENT...

... THE FALCON WOMAN SPREADS HER WINGS AND--

THOU CANST *FLY--?!*

AYE, THOR-- I CAN RIDE THE WIND AND REACH FOR THE MOON!

'TWOULD BE A PITY, WOULD IT NOT, TO RETURN-- AFTER THIS-- TO THE PALE FORM OF SHAWNA LYNDE?

AND KYRIE, TOO HAS OTHER POWERS--POWERS OF PERCEIVING THE GREATER TRUTHS OF LIFE HIDDEN BENEATH THE SURFACE.

AS SHAWNA LYNDE, I NEVER DREAMED MY GOOD FRIEND DONALD BLAKE COULD BE THOR.

I ACTED TOO HASTILY. THEIR TRANSFORMATIONS ART MORE THAN MERE MASKS, AND INCLUDE POWERS SUCH AS FLIGHT...

YET IF KYRIE ALREADY KNEW MINE TRUE IDENTITY, THEN I HAVE LOST NOTHING.

ONE FACT IS CLEAR--THOU ART FROM ASGARD, AND TO ASGARD I SEE THEE RETURNED!

YE FORGET, THOR, WE NOW BE PART MORTAL... AND MORTALS BE FORBIDDEN FROM ENTERING ASGARD...

...BY LAW OF THINE OWN FATHER ODIN. BUT EVEN *COULD* WE RETURN TO ASGARD, WHAT THEN OF SHAWNA LYNDE, NURSE STEVENS, THORNE KIRBY...

ENOW, SLITHGARN! THY WORDS ART LIKE THY EXISTENCE--VEXING AND TROUBLESOME! YET I SHALL--

TOK TOK TOK

THE DOOR YET AGAIN--FORCING ME TO AGAIN RESUME THE MORTAL DONALD BLAKE'S FORM...

BOOM

...BUT IF YOU SO MUCH AS--

WORRY NOT, THOR--THOU ART OUR KEEPER NOW. WE WON'T BLOW YOUR SECRET.

PACKAGE FOR YA.

YES, MORE MEDICAL SUPPLIES. UH...YOU'RE NOT COLD, ARE YOU?

NOPE--HOT AS A PISTOL.

AT LEAST THEY WEREN'T LYING ABOUT BEING ONLY FIVE...

HEY! STOP IT! THAT WINE WAS FOR ENTERTAINING GUESTS!

OVER HERE, SLITHGARN! YE PROMISED ME ANOTHER DRINK!

ARE *WE* NOT THY GUESTS, KEEPER BLAKE?

AYE, DON--CHANGE TO THOR AND JOIN US. DON'T BE SUCH A WET RAG!

HAST THOU NEVER WISHED TO RIDE THE BACK OF THE DRAGON? HAST THOU NEVER YEARNED TO PULL DOWN THE MOON AND THE STARS? WHY ART THOU SO AFRAID TO ENTER THE INFINITE DARKNESS?

OH, BOY... MAYBE I DO NEED A DRINK... JUST SOME WATER...

AYE, DON -- 'TIS THE TRUE ECSTASY OF LIFE! WHY DREAM IT WHEN YOU CAN *LIVE* IT?

NAY, SOMETHING BETTER THAN WATER, O KEEPER...

ONE OF THY GOLDEN SCALES, FOR SPICE, FAIRGOLD--

HERE, KEEPER-- THE NECTAR OF THE GODS!

EH? OH, WELL...

...WHY NOT?

HAH! NOW, WHILST OUR KEEPER TAKES HIS REST, 'TIS TIME TO ENTER THE NIGHT AND REVEL TILL DAWN!

POOR DON, I WONDER IF HE'LL EVER UNDERSTAND.

WAIT! YE CAN'T LEAVE ME BEHIND!

'TWAS *MY* GOLDEN SCALE WHICH PUT HIM TO SLEEP AND GAINED THY FREEDOM! COME BACK!

WAIT FOR A RAIN, WENCH-- THEN SWIM THE STREETS AFTER US.

AH WELL... AT LEAST I HAVE THE KEEPER'S HAND-SOME FACE TO GAZE UPON...

HAH! SEE HOW THE LITTLE MORTALS CRINGE AT OUR PASSAGE!

THEY CRINGE, GRULT, BECAUSE THOU ART SO UGLY.

TO THINK WE WERE ONCE AS MEEK...

COME, ACROSS YON AVENUE WHERE--

HONNNNK

SKREEEEE

YA THINK HALLOWEEN HAPPENS EVERY DAY, BUB? TAKE OFF THE STUPID MASK WHEN YOU'RE CROSSIN' THE STREET AND MAYBE YA WON'T BE SO BLIND!

TA

YE *DARE*, MORTAL?!

YE DARE TO RAISE THY VOICE 'GAINST GRULT--?!

SKRASH

YE DARE INSULT THE BULL OF THE HINTERLANDS?!

SKROOM

ENOUGH, GRULT-- LEST YE *INJURE* ONE OF THEM!

NAY! 'TIS *NEVER* ENOW WHEN SUCH KNAVES ARE AT BLAME!

BUT THEY'RE *HELPLESS* AGAINST THEE, GRULT! THEY BE MERE *MORTALS*...

VERY WELL, KYRIE, PERHAPS IT *IS* ENOW-- 'TWILL DO, AT LEAST, FOR A *START* ON THE NIGHT'S WORK...

AYE, GRULT, BUT FOR OUR FIRST NIGHT IN THIS NEW WORLD... LET US GO *EASY,* SHALL WE?

THAT *WAS* EASY, KYRIE--OR DON'T YOU REMEMBER WHAT GRULT IS LIKE WHEN HE GETS *MAD?*

HEH, HEH, HEH.

BOO.

El Dorado

IS THIS THE PLACE YE SPIED, GRULT--

--BEFORE THY UGLY FACE DROPPED YON METAL BEAST DEAD IN ITS TRACKS?

AYE, BORNA, THIS IS THE PLACE...

...AND HAVE A CARE FOR THINE *OWN* TRACKS.

WHAT IN THE NAME OF YMIR'S FROSTY BEARD--?!

DON'T YOU REMEMBER? BORNA?

THERE'S LIFE IN *SOME* MORTALS...

GET A LOAD O' *THIS.*

SPIFFIN' UP LIKE URBAN COWBOYS IS ONE THING-- BUT THESE CLOWNS ARE TRYIN' TO OUTRANK THE *BROOKFIELD ZOO.*

YEAH--BE THE FIRST TIME THE BULL EVER BUCKED HIS *BROTHER.*

WHAT?!

TRY THE MECHANICAL BULL, FRIEND?

AGAIN YE DARE TO MOCK ME--?!

GRULT...

STAND YE ASIDE, KYRIE! I'VE CHANGED MY MIND...

ENOUGH IS *NOT* ENOW!

THROOM

EEEEE!

LOUSY DRUNK!

BRATCH

YEEE-HAH! A FIGHT!!

SWAK

WHOK

BEHIND THEE, GRULT--!

EH--?

NEVER MIND...

SHL' AP- AP AP

FHWAM

I'LL DEAL WITH THE COWARDLY CUR MYSELF!

MEANWHILE, BACK AT DON BLAKE'S NEW APARTMENT ON MICHIGAN AVENUE...

BLUB-BLUP WHAT IN THE--?!

FSHSH

HOW DID I GET IN *HERE*?!

'TWAS NOT EASY, DOCTOR...

I HAD TO CRAWL ACROSS THE FLOOR DRAGGING THEE THE WHOLE WAY!

FAIRGOLD! WHERE ARE THE OTHERS--?

OH, THEY WENT OUT FOR THE NIGHT TO HAVE SOME FUN-- LEAVING US HERE IN PRIVACY FOR OUR *OWN* FUN...

LET GO OF ME!

OH, *NO*--!

THEY'RE LIABLE TO DEMOLISH THE ENTIRE CITY!

GOT TO CHANGE TO THOR AND *STOP* THEM!

BOOM

SOON, HIGH OVER RUSH STREET...

THE SIGNS COULD HARDLY BE MORE CLEAR...

AYE-- THEY'VE PASSED THIS WAY.

SKRASH

THEN AGAIN, MAYHAP I UNDER-ESTIMATE THEM.

'TIS EVEN WORSE THAN I FEARED...

SWAK
KRASH
WUD
TUD
WHOK
SPLAM
THOK

ENOW!!

THOOM

AND WHEN THE SHOCKWAVE FADES...

...AN IMMEDIATE SILENCE OF SETTLING DUST. IT LASTS FOR A SPAN OF TEN HEARTBEATS; THEN IN A QUIETLY COLD BUT CHILLINGLY CLEAR VOICE, THOR SPEAKS...

CANST THEE NOT SEE WHAT THY "FUN" HAS WROUGHT?

SOME OF THESE MORTALS BE GRIEVOUSLY INJURED-- BY *THY HANDS!*

AND SUCH IS THOR'S PERSONAL AUTHORITY THAT NO REPLY IS BROOKED--NOR IS ANY REPLY POSSIBLE...

THIS IS NOT ASGARD, WHERE SUCH FURY MAY BE SPENT 'GAINST THY EQUALS! THIS BE *MIDGARD*, WHERE MORTALS BLEED AND *DIE!*

CANST THEE NOT SEE THAT THIS FRAGILE REALM WAS NOT MADE FOR THE LIKES OF THY KIND?!

AND, AFTER A LONG, HUMBLING SILENCE...

YES, THOR, I CAN SEE-- AND I THINK THE OTHERS NOW UNDER-STAND AS WELL.

'TIS TIME TO RETURN TO THE MUSEUM AND DEPART THIS REALM FOREVER.

THE MUSEUM--?

YOU REALLY *WEREN'T* LISTENING, WERE YOU? THE SILVER CHALICE IN THE VIKING EXHIBIT--THAT IS THE KEY-- THAT AND *THOU,* THOR.

QUICKLY, BEFORE THE POLICE ARRIVE-- FETCH FAIRGOLD WHILST I TAKE THE OTHERS TO THE MUSEUM.

AYE, KYRIE-- AND I THANK THEE WITH ALL MY HEART.

AND SO... TO THE FIELD MUSEUM, DRIVER-- SWIFTLY.

THIS TIME O'NIGHT? WHAT ARE YA-- THE NEXT EXHIBIT?

"NAY-- THE PRESENT ONE."

MINUTES LATER...

AYE, FAIRGOLD--I AM *CERTAIN* THOU MUST RETURN WHENCE THOU CAME.

VERY WELL, THOR --THEN AT LEAST THIS ONE FLIGHT IN THY ARMS HAS GIVEN WORTH TO MY BRIEF STAY IN THIS STRANGE REALM...

...AND HAS GIVEN ME, TOO, SOMETHING GOLDEN TO DREAM ON FOR ALL OF ETERNITY.

ENOUGH, FAIR-GOLD! INSIDE-- QUICKLY BEFORE THE NIGHT-WATCH REVIVES...

THOR FINDS THE OTHERS WAITING AT THE VIKING EXHIBIT, WHERE KYRIE BEGINS SPEAKING WITH A HEAVY HEART...

TIS TIME TO EXPLAIN, THOR, THE HOW AND WHY OF OUR COMING...

"IN ASGARD, LONG BEFORE EVEN YOU WERE BORN, THOR, WE WERE COLLECTED BY THE GRIM GOD RIM-THURSAR, AND FOR A TIME WE WERE CONTENT ENOUGH IN HIS MENAGERIE...

BUT THEN HE BECAME AMBITIOUS AND SOUGHT TO USE US IN A CAMPAIGN AGAINST ODIN HIMSELF.

"WHEN WE REFUSED TO ACT AS HIS QUISLINGS, RIMTHURSAR SLEW US ALL IN A RAGE.

"SEALING OUR SOULS EACH IN A SINGLE DROP OF BLOOD, HE THEN STAINED THE BOTTOM OF HIS SILVER CHALICE WITH THE FIVE DROPLETS, FREEZING US FOREVER IN SILVER.

"THEN, IN A FINAL PIQUE OF FURY, HE CAST US OUT FROM ASGARD, HURLING THE CHALICE DOWN TO THE LOWER REALM OF MIDGARD, OR 'EARTH'...

"...AND HERE WE REMAINED TRAPPED, UNTIL OUR SOULS WERE THIS MORNING THAWED BY THE GAZE OF A KIND GOD..."

...BY *THY* GAZE, THOR, EVEN THOUGH YOU LOOKED UPON US IN THY MORTAL GUISE OF DONALD BLAKE.

AND HOW MAY YOU RETURN TO THE CHALICE?

BY THE POWER OF ANY ASGARDIAN ENCHANTMENT--INCLUDING THE POWER OF THY URU HAMMER MJOLNIR--FOCUSED THROUGH THE CHALICE.

AYE--BUT WE'VE DECIDED *AGAINST* THIS PLAN OF RETURN--OR THREE OF US HAVE, AT LEAST...

WE PROPOSE AN ALTERNATIVE--LET US REMAIN AMONG THE LIVING, THOR, AND WE PROMISE TO BE GOOD. WE MEAN NO HARM TO THE MORTALS HERE--WE MERELY WISH TO *LIVE*...

NAY--NOT WHILE THY LIFE COULD SPELL THE DEATHS OF INNOCENT MORTALS. 'TIS IMPOSSIBLE FOR YE TO REMAIN HERE, BUT THIS I VOW...

... TO RETURN THE CHALICE TO ASGARD AND DO EVERYTHING WITHIN MY POWER TO SEE THAT THY PROPER AND RIGHTFUL LIFE IS THERE RESTORED.

THE THREE BEAST-GODS SHRUG...

AT LEAST WE TRIED, SLITHGARN--AND IF THOR KEEPS HIS WORD, OUR LOT WILL SURPASS EVEN *THIS* EXISTENCE.

WITH RENEWED LIFE IN ASGARD AS THE POSSIBLE REWARD, WE ARE HONORABLE ENOUGH TO RISK THE SACRIFI--

EH? THE POWER OF THE URU HAMMER--LANCING OUT FROM THE CHALICE--FILLING ME WITH... WITH...

WAIT! SOMETHING IS WRONG! IT SINGLES OUT BORNA--!

...WITH *RAGE*, FOUL THUNDER GOD!

AND WITH THE LUST FOR VENGENCE ON HE WHO WOULD DARE REPEAT THE *CRIME OF RIMTHURSAR!*

HE...HE'S *MAD!*

THE SILVER CHALICE OF RIMTHURSAR IS *HELL*, THUNDER GOD!

THROK

'TIS A PLACE OF COLD, UNENDING DARKNESS AND DESPAIR!

'TIS A LIMBO OF SCREAMING SOULS!

NEVER SHALL BORNA AGAIN SUBMIT TO SUCH A PLACE!

SOMEHOW THE ENCHANTMENT HAS GONE WRONG-- TURNING BORNA MALEVOLENT! WE MUST HELP THOR!

HELP AND SPOIL THE AMUSEMENT OF A GOOD FIGHT? ART THOU *ALSO* MAD, KYRIE?

AYE, AS THORNE KIRBY WOULDST SAY--YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING! *ME* HELP *BORNA?* I LOATHE THE BEAR'S VERY PELT--AND HOPE THOR SKINS IT FROM HIM ALIVE!

THEN, AS KYRIE STEPS FORTH ALONE--

FRAK

STAND YE BACK, FALCON-WOMAN! THOR NEEDS NO HELP IN HIS FIGHTS!

A LARGE BOAST, THOR--FOR SUCH A SMALL THUNDER GOD!

SHROKK

THOU ART BEWITCHED, BORNA AND NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THY ACTIONS...

THUS, I WILL SPARE THEE THE BLOWS OF MINE HAMMER...

NOR DO I WISH TO INFLICT *ANY* HARM UPON THEE...

WUMP

...BUT THE WITCH-HATE INFESTING THY MIND LEAVES ME NO RECOURSE.

AGAIN YE BOAST, THOR-- BUT DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY BOASTING BULLIES THORNE KIRBY HAS LONGED TO PUNCH--?

OR HOW MANY TIMES BORNA THE BEAR HAS DREAMED OF AVENGING RIMTHURSAR'S CRAVEN ACTS OF ENSLAVEMENT AND MURDER?!

NAY, BORNA, I KNOW NOT-- BUT WELL CAN I IMAGINE...

AND I HAVE TOLD THEE--I WILL DO ALL IN MY POWER TO UNDO THE INJUSTICE DEALT THEE...

BUT FIRST MUST I UNDO THE INJUSTICE CAUSED BY THEMSELVES...

SPANN

FIRST MUST I FREE THE FIVE MORTAL BODIES YE HAVE USURPED!

AND EVEN AS BORNA FALLS, MOMENTARILY BLACKING OUT--

THE SILVER CHALICE OF RIMTHURSAR --ITS GLOW HAS FADED!

THE EVIL SORCERY HAS DIED WITH BORNA'S FALL!

THEN, AS THE GROGGY BEAR-GOD REVIVES...

D-DON'T KNOW WHAT CAME OVER ME... BUT C-COULDN'T HELP MYSELF...

...DIDN'T MEAN TO ATTACK THEE THOR... BUT THE BETTER GOD WON ANYWAY...

'TIS CLEAR WE CANNOT AGAIN ATTEMPT *THAT* METHOD, KYRIE...

GEE, AIN'T THAT A *SHAME!*

AYE--I GUESS WE'RE STUCK HERE ON MIDGARD AFTER ALL, HEH HEH.

I... I DON'T UNDERSTAND, THOR-- THE CHALICE MUST HAVE BEEN SABOTAGED, MEANING THERE BE DARK TREACHERY INVOLVED-- NOTHING LESS THAN THE POWER OF... OF ANOTHER ASGARDIAN GOD...

AYE...

MY BROTHER *LOKI.*

NEXT ISSUE: *A SHOCKING SURPRISE AWAITS THOR IN ASGARD--AS WELL AS OMINOUS CHANCES FOR KYRIE, BORNA, SLITHGARN, FAIRGOLD, AND GRULT HERE ON EARTH. AND BEHIND IT ALL --*

THE MAGICKS OF MENACE!

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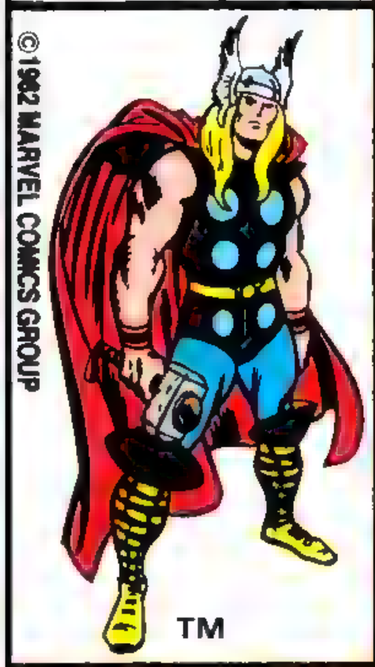

THE MIGHTY THOR™

DIE, THUNDER GOD! RIMTHURSAR COMMANDS IT!

A. KUPPERBERG & B. BREEDING

MADNESS IS... THE MENAGERIE!

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR—and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning—and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard....

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

DOUG MOENCH SCRIPTER • ALAN KUPPERBERG PENCILER • STONE & FRIENDS INKERS • JANICE CHIANG LETTERS • GEORGE ROUSSOS COLORS • JIM SALICRUP EDITOR • JIM SHOOTER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

EARLY SPRING AMIDST A CLUMP OF TREES IN CHICAGO'S GRANT PARK...THE CHATTERING OF BIRDS PROVIDES A VERY ORDINARY BACK-DROP FOR A MOST EXTRAORDINARY TABLEAU OF THUNDER GODS AND CHANGELINGS...

FIRST THERE BE THE MYSTERY OF THY TRANSFORMATION FROM ORDINARY MORTALS INTO... INTO...

...INTO THE LONG-LOST ASGARDIAN MENAGERIE OF RIMTHURSAR, THOR!

AYE. INTO A MENAGERIE. THEN THERE BE THE MYSTERY OF WHO DIDST POSSESS BORNA'S SOUL LAST NIGHT IN THE MUSEUM, TURNING HIM EVIL...

WHO CARES? I AM FINE NOW--AND KYRIE HERE HAST NEVER LOOKED MORE BEAUTIFUL.

WHY, THANK YOU, BORNA!

I SEE THE HAND OF MINE EVIL BROTHER *LOKI* IN THIS--AND SO MUST WE VENTURE TO ASGARD, TO STOP HIM!

NICE ENOW RIGHT HERE ON MIDGARD--SHEER FOLLY TO LEAVE.

ACTUALLY, IT SEEMS THAT THOR ALONE IS INTENT ON GRIMNESS, WHILE THE OTHERS COULD CARE LESS. AS WEIRD AS THEY ARE, THEY EXULT IN THE GIDDY NOVELTY OF BEING **ALIVE!**

MAGICK'S MENACE!

YET YE ARE STILL PART-MORTAL, AND MORTALS BE NOT ALLOWED IN ASGARD. 'TIS A PROBLEM.

NO PROBLEM--ONCE WE FIND SOMETHING TO DRINK! HAST THOU FORGOTTEN THAT *WE* VOTE TO *REMAIN* HERE ON MIDGARD--AND HAVE SOME *FUN*?

HAST THOU FORGOTTEN HOW LONG WE WERE TRAPPED IN THE BOTTOM OF RIMTHURSAR'S SILVER CHALICE IN THE MUSEUM?

I SAY THEE NAY! YE HAVE USURPED MORTALS' BODIES AND MUST BE MADE TO SURRENDER THEM!

BESIDES, MIDGARD IS NOT THE PLACE FOR THEE IN THY PRESENT FORMS!

MUCH AS I HATE TO, THOR, I AGREE.

MORE THAN ANY OF THE OTHERS, KYRIE, THOU SPEAKEST WITH SENSE, AND IN THY MORTAL PERSONALITY--IN THE VOICE OF ***SHAWNA LYNDE***. WHY?

MAYBE I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO WAS TRULY SATISFIED WITH THE WAY I WAS, THOR...

HAH! AS A DULL MORTAL WHOSE FEET COULD NOT LEAVE THE GROUND?

AYE, KYRIE, ATTEMPT THY GENTLE DECEPTIONS ON THOR ALL YOU WANT--

--BUT BREATHE THEM SOFTLY WITHIN *OUR* HEARING.

NEARBY...

♪ OH, I'M SIT-TIN' ON TOP OF DA DEE DA DAH DEE, OH YESSIREE, I'M SIT-TIN' ON TOP OF-- ♪

A GOOD MORN TO THEE, SIR. THY JOYOUS VOICE AND SPRIGHTLY STRIDE IS MOST EN-CHANTING.

WOULDST THOU CARE TO JOIN ME IN MY FOUNTAIN OF ECSTASY?

ULP! M-M-MERMAID?

A M-MERMAID! SOME PER-VERT DRESSED UP LIKE A MERMAID IN THE FOUNTAIN!

"PERVERT"--?

CALL THE COPS! CALL THE--

--UHN! WHO--?

THOU DAREST INSULT THE BEAUTEOUS FAIRGOLD, MORTAL?

BORNA--!

MORE OF THEM!

BY JIBBERS, A WHOLE ARMY OF PERVERT FREAKS! STAND BACK-- BEFORE I BASH IN YOUR CRANIUMS!

YMIR'S BEARD! HE'S A DOUGHTY OLD MORTAL!

AYE, SLITHGARN-- TEACH HIM A LESSON!

WITH LIGHTNING RAPIDITY, SLITHGARN'S TONGUE LASHES OUT AROUND THE MAN'S CANE, AND--

OWTCH!

KONK

ENOW, SLITHGARN, LEST YE HARM THE MAN-- OR ANGER HIS FELLOW MORTALS!

BUT IT'S ALREADY TOO LATE TO PRE-VENT THE LATTER...

LEAVE 'IM ALONE, YA LOUSY FREAKS!

HELLLP!

AND THE MENAGERIE OF RIMTHURSAR IS, AS EVER, SWIFT TO JOIN THE FRAY...

HALT! COME BACK!

...EVEN AT THE RISK OF DEFYING MIGHTY THOR.

HEY, SLOW DOWN! WHAT'S THE TROUBLE!

FREAKS! PERVERTS! THEY BEANED ME--

BUT BEFORE CHICAGO'S FINEST CAN GET INVOLVED, THOR DECIDES TO TAKE THE MATTER IN HAND...

FLY TRUE, MYSTIC MJOLNIR, TO YON FOUNTAIN-- AND TO AN *END* OF THIS FOLLY!

THE ENCHANTED URU HAMMER OBEYS--

--WHIRLING AROUND THE FOUNTAIN AT BLINDING SPEED--

WHAT IN THE--?

--UNTIL A WATERSPOUT IS CREATED, DOUSING TEMPERS AT THE FLARING POINT.

THEN, BROOKING NO FURTHER ARGUMENT, THOR SWIFTLY SCOOPS UP THE MORE RECALCITRANT MEMBERS OF THE MENAGERIE--

TO YON TOWER, KYRIE!

AYE, THOR!

--AND STREAKS OFF FOR THE WORLD'S TALLEST BUILDING.

DID... DID YOU *SEE* WHAT JUST *HAPPENED*?

BLUB... COFF... GASP...

YEAH-- LOOKS LIKE IT'S GONNA BE ANOTHER ONE O' THOSE DAYS!

ATOP THE SEARS TOWER...

THY PRESENCE HERE ON MIDGARD BE MADNESS!

'TIS LONG PAST TIME FOR IT TO *END!*

RELEASE ME, FAIRGOLD!

BUT THOR--THOU ART SO HANDSOME! TO HOLD THEE IN MY ARMS IS AN ECSTASY OF DIVINE--!

RELEASE ME!

RULES OR NONE, WE VENTURE AT ONCE TO ASGARD!

IF MY FATHER ODIN WISHES TO JUDGE THEE MORTAL--

--THEN LET HIM DO SO AFTER MJOLNIR HAS BRIDGED THE VOID 'TWIXT LOWER AND HIGHER REALMS--

--BRINGING US INTO THE VERY PRESENCE!

AND, AFTER A SPAN WHICH IS BOTH AN ETERNITY AND BUT A TWINKLING...

HAIL, BRAVE HEIMDALL--KEEPER OF THE RAINBOW BRIDGE BIFROST AND GUARDIAN OF ASGARD...

HAIL, ODINSON!

I COME WITH COMPANIONS, SEEKING AUDIENCE WITH ALL-FATHER ODIN.

AND BE THY COMPANIONS MORTAL OR IMMORTAL, FRIEND THOR?

I AM FORCED TO CONCEDE, HEIMDALL... A STRANGE TOUCH OF BOTH.

HEIMDALL CONSIDERS BUT A MOMENT...

THEN I MUST DENY THY REQUEST, THOR--*NO* MORTAL BE ALLOWED IN ASGARD, NOT EVEN ONE TOUCHED WITH IMMORTALITY.

AS I THOUGHT, HEIMDALL.

WILT THOU, THEN, *GUARD* THEM WHILST I SEEK OUT MY FATHER?

AYE--BUT MY SOLE DUTY IS TO GUARD THE BRIDGE. THUS, I CAN PREVENT THEM FROM PASSING ON... BUT SHOULD THEY CHOOSE TO DEPART, I COULD NOT LEAVE MY STATION TO PURSUE THEM.

THOR GAZES AT THE MENAGERIE SUSPICIOUSLY...

WE SHALL REMAIN HERE, THOR--I ASSURE YOU.

AYE--WE COULD HARDLY FIND OUR WAY BACK TO MIDGARD FROM HERE ANYWAY

AND SO, THE THUNDERER STRIDES ACROSS THE WALK OF COLORS...

...TO THE PALACE.

THEN MY FATHER IS NOT HERE, VIZIER?

NAY, THOR, HE HAS JOURNEYED TO THE HINTERLANDS, THERE TO SETTLE BREWING CONFLICT-- AS THOU MAYEST SEE ON THE ODINSCREEN.

THEN LOKI HAS CHOSEN HIS TIME WELL, THE CRAFTY DEVIL!

LOKI? UP TO MORE MISCHIEF? BUT HE HAS BEEN UNDER CONSTANT SURVEILLANCE, THOR...

AYE? THEN THE WATCH BE COMPRISED OF THE BLIND.

LOKI'S DWELLING...

WOULDST THOU CARE TO TEND THE FIRE, MY HUSBAND?

HOW CAN SHE BE SO SWEET? DOES SHE NOT KNOW BEING TIED TO HER IS AGONY UNPARALLELED?

STAND ASIDE, GUARDS! I MEAN TO *ENTER!*

THOR--!

AYE, MINE EVIL BROTHER--AND A WRATHFUL THOR, COME TO REVERSE THY FOUL SORCERY!

THOU HAST TRANSFORMED FIVE INNOCENT MORTALS INTO ANCIENT ASGARDIAN BEASTMEN!

WHAT?! YE DARE ACCUSE ME OF SUCH THING-- WHILST I HAVE BEEN CHAINED TO MY WIFE *SIGYN?*

AYE-- I ACCUSE THEE OF THAT AND *MORE!*

THEN THOU SHALT PAY FOR THY IMPERTINENT--

--UHN!

STOP IT, THOR! LOKI SPEAKS THE TRUTH!

I'VE BEEN AT HIS SIDE EVERY MOMENT OF THE PAST MONTH!

'TIS TRUE, THOR--WE TOO HAVE GUARDED HIM IN ODIN'S ABSENCE!

HE COULD NOT HAVE POSSIBLY WORKED ANY SORCERY WITHOUT OUR KNOWLEDGE.

THEN IF NOT LOKI... *WHO*--?

IF THE FIVE CREATURES ARE INDEED AS YOU DESCRIBE, WHY NOT ASK THE DWARVES OF THE MOUND? AND DARKEN MY DOORWAY WITH THY FALSE ACCUSATIONS NO MORE, "NOBLE" BROTHER...

VERY WELL...

ASK THEM I SHALL!

BUT IF THIS IS ANOTHER OF THY TRICKS, BROTHER--

--THY DOORWAY WILL BE DARKENED WITH FAR MORE THAN MERE SHADOWS OF SUSPICION!

MEANWHILE, ASTRIDE HIS EIGHT-LEGGED STEED **SLEIPNIR**, *ODIN GAZES WITH HEAVY HEART UPON THE STARK SCENE BELOW...*

MUST MY REALM BE *CONSTANTLY* AFFLICTED WITH STRIFE?

AND WHY--OF ALL POSSIBLE WARS--WHY *THIS* ONE?!

HOW MAY I POSSIBLY INTERVENE WHEN ONE OF THE FACTIONS IS LED BY *QUEEN JOLENA* OF SKARNHEIM, SHE WHO ONCE FILLED MY HEART WITH LOVE--AND MAY, PERHAPS, *STILL* LAY CLAIM TO THAT AFFECTION?

'TIS A DARK DAY INDEED WHEN THE ALL-FATHER OF ASGARD MUST QUESTION HIS OWN THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS...

...AND THEREBY STIFLE HIS VERY POWER TO ACT.

THE LAND OF THE DWARVES...

THE MOUND--'TIS *GONE!*

AYE, THUNDER GOD--YOU FIND US IN A HOMELESS AND WOEFUL STATE...

OUR MOUND WAS STOLEN--AND PERVERTED TO THE AIMS OF VILE SORCERY...

IT BEGAN WHEN A SHAPECHANGER TRANSFORMED HIMSELF INTO A HAWK, AND FLEW TO THE WATERFALL MAIDEN FREYA...

"BY TELLING HER THAT ODIN HAD DIED, HE CAUSED HER TO WEEP TEARS OF GOLD.

"ANYONE ELSE WOULD HAVE KNOWN THIS TO BE UNTRUE, OF COURSE, BUT FREYA IS GULLIBLE AND GIVEN TO EMOTION.

"CHANGING TO HIS TRUE FORM, HE OFFERED TO DRY HER EYES...

"...POCKETING THE GOLDEN DROPLETS FOR HIS OWN LATER USE.

"NEXT, WITH HIS MAGIC SWORD, HE CAME TO OUR MOUND AND BADE US FETCH SERPENTS--

"--ON PENALTY OF OUR LIVES SHOULD WE REFUSE.

"HE THEN SACRIFICED A BEAR ATOP OUR MOUND...

"...AND COMMANDED US TO LAY THE SERPENTS ATOP THE BLOOD-SOAKED MOUND.

"AS THE SERPENTS SQUIRMED IN THE BLOOD OF THE SACRIFICE, HE THEN SPRINKLED THE GOLDEN TEARS OVER THEM--

"--AND BADE THEM TO BIND THE MOUND.

"THE SERPENTS OBEYED, MESHING OVER THE WHOLE OF THE MOUND...

"...AND LOCKING IT IN THE GRIP OF HIS SORCERY.

"WITH HIS MAGIC SWORD, AND MANY OATHS OF SORCERY--

"--HE THEN SLICED THE MOUND FROM ITS FOUNDATION, DESTROYING OUR HOME FOREVER.

"HARNESSED TO A SIX-LEGGED BULL, THE MOUND WAS HAULED TO A MOUNTAINTOP CLOSER TO THE SUN...

"...AND WAS THERE MELTED, AS HE DROPPED FEATHERS FROM HIS OWN HAWK-GUISE ONTO THE REMAINING COMPONENTS."

BY THE ELEMENTS OF THE MAGICK I HAVE WROUGHT-- FLIGHT OF HAWK, SERPENTS' MESH, SCALES OF GOLD, BLOOD OF BEAR, STRENGTH OF BULL-- THE STOLEN CHALICE SHALL ONCE AGAIN BE MINE!

THEN THAT WAS THE MAGICK WHICH WAS TRIGGERED BY DR. DONALD BLAKE--AND WHICH FREED THE MENAGERIE FROM THE CHALICE. WAS THIS SHAPE-CHANGER'S NAME RIMTHURSAR--?

AYE, THUNDER GOD-- BUT HOW COULD YOU KNOW?

RIMTHURSAR WAS THE ORIGINAL KEEPER OF THE MENAGERIE, AND WHO HAD BEEN PRESUMED DEAD, LO, THESE MANY AGES.

HE ARRANGED HIS OWN "DEATH", THOR.

HE HAS LIVED ON IN OTHER SHAPES EVER SINCE-- LATELY, HE HAS CALLED HIMSELF *FARBAUTI*.

FARBAUTI! THEN I WAS WRONG ABOUT MY BROTHER, LOKI.

THE TRUE VILLAIN IN THIS AFFAIR IS FARBAUTI HIMSELF, HE WHO IS KNOWN AS--

"--THE *CRUEL STRIKER!*

FARBAUTI! BUT--*HOW?!*

SORCERY, HEIMDALL--YOU FOOL!

IT...IT'S *HIM!* HE STILL *ALIVE!*

STAND FAST, CRUEL STRIKER!

FEAR NOT, HEIMDALL--IT IS NOT INTO ASGARD I WOULD TAKE MY MENAGERIE...

...BUT RATHER, DOWN TO *MIDGARD!*

WHY DO YOU CALL HIM FARBAUTI? HE IS ANCIENT *RIMTHURSAR*--OUR KEEPER. HE--

BUT BEFORE KYRIE CAN UTTER ANOTHER WORD, SHE FINDS HERSELF--ALONG WITH THE OTHERS--ON THE STEPS OF CHICAGO'S FIELD MUSEUM...

THE SILVER CHALICE WHICH ONCE BOUND YE AWAITS WITHIN THESE WALLS-- YE SHALL HELP ME REGAIN IT!

NAY, RIMTHURSAR! WITHOUT THE CHALICE WE BE *FREE* OF THY CRUEL HOLD--

--AND FREE IS HOW WE SHALL REMAIN!

FOOLS! YOU ARE ALREADY MINE--BOUND BY ANCIENT SPELLS THAT SURPASS ALL TIME!

I SEEK THE CHALICE TO ENFORCE THE THRALLDOM OF *OTHERS!*

NOW GO-- AND *TAKE* THE SILVER CHALICE!

I AM *FARBAUTI*, THE CRUEL STRIKER--AYE, AND *RIMTHUR-SAR*, THE KEEPER OF THE MENAGERIE!

YOU *MUST* OBEY ME!

AND SO, POSSESSED BY FARBAUTI, THE MENAGERIE RUSHES THE MUSEUM GUARDS...

WHAT THE--?! LOOKS LIKE ONE OF THE EXHIBITS COME TO LIFE! BETTER CALL THE COPS!

I'M ON MY WAY, BROTHER-- ON MY WAY!

MEANWHILE, IN FARBAUTI'S ASGARDIAN ABODE...

GONE! THE VILLAIN HATH ALREADY FLED...

BUT WHENCE--? AND--

YOU ARE TOO LATE, THOR! THE CHALICE IS MINE--AND THEN ASGARD!

EH?! WHAT MANNER OF VILE SORCERY--?!

THE TAUNTING OF CHEAP MAGICKS ASIDE, ONE THING IS CLEAR...

I STAND VICTIM OF TREACHERY!

FARBAUTI WAITED UNTIL I VENTURED HERE TO ASGARD BEFORE MAKING HIS MOVE...

AND NOW I MUST STRIVE ALL THE HARDER TO REGAIN LOST TIME IN MY PURSUIT!

MY COMPANIONS, HEIMDALL-- THE MENAGERIE! WHERE HAVE THEY--?

TAKEN BY FARBAUTI, THE CRUEL STRIKER, THOR--WHENCE I DO NOT KNOW.

BUT THOR DOES KNOW.

TO MIDGARD--

--AND THE MUSEUM...

...WHENCE ISSUES THE SOUND OF MORTAL'S GUNFIRE!

WHERE ARE THE COPS, HANK?! WE CAN'T HOLD 'EM OFF OURSELVES-- THESE SLUGS DON'T EVEN *FAZE* 'EM!

BRAM

BRAM

ALLTOO TRUE, MORTALS! BUT OUR RAGE SHALL *TAKE* ITS TOLL UPON--!

STOP, GRULT! ART THOU *MAD* TO AGAIN ENDANGER A MORTAL?!

'TIS HATED THOR! *SLAY HIM!*

KYRIE! WHAT--?!

YON HAWK--! IT MUST BE THE CHANGELING--

-- CRUEL FARBAUTI HIMSELF, WORKING SOME SPELL OF EVIL ON THEM, POSSESSING THEM--

-- E'EN AS HE LAST NIGHT POSSESSED BORNA!

KLUD

BUT NOW THE ENTIRE MENAGERIE BE ARRAYED 'GAINST ME!

AND THE HAWK-- FARBAUTI-- STREAKS FOR THE SHATTERED DOOR!

-- USING MY STRUGGLE AS DIVERSION TO ENTER THE MUSEUM!

BUT E'EN WERE *ALL* THE CREATURES OF ASGARD ARRAYED 'GAINST ME--

--THOR SAYS *NAY!*

NOW THE PATH BE CLEAR--AND FARBAUTI CAN SEEK ONLY ONE THING...

...THE SILVER CHALICE IN THE VIKING EXHIBIT!

AFTER THE THUNDER GOD! SLAY HIM! OUR MASTER RIMTHURSAR COMMANDS IT!

THE CHALICE! WITH ITS TIME-LOST POWER I MAY DO ANYTHING-- ENTHRALL ALL OF MIDGARD, CONVERTING ALL MORTALS-- *EVERYONE*-- TO OBEDIENT BEASTS OF ANTIQUITY!

ALL OF MIDGARD SHALL BE MY PERSONAL MENAGERIE!

ARRIVING TOO LATE TO PREVENT FARBAUTI-RIM THURSAR'S THEFT OF THE CHALICE, THOR STANDS READY TO HURL MJOLNIR -- BUT THEN HESITATES...

HE'S NOT YET SEEN ME YET! MAYHAP I SHOULD LET HIM ESCAPE THE MUSEUM, THAT OUR INEVITABLE FIGHT DOTH NOT IMPERIL PRECIOUS ARTIFACTS!

AYE -- SINCE HE NEEDS HIS HANDS TO CARRY THE CHALICE, HE CANNOT AGAIN DON HIS HAWK GUISE.

AND SO, FARBAUTI-RIMTHURSAR FLEES TO CHICAGO'S YACHT BASIN ON THE EASTERN SHORE OF THE CITY, UNAWARE THAT THE THUNDER GOD FOLLOWS CLOSELY IN HIS TRACKS...

...UNTIL --

HOLD, VILLAIN! THY FLIGHT HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH!

BUT *MINE* HAS JUST BEGUN!

FLEE, MASTER! WE SHALL YET FULFILL THY COMMAND!

EXCELLENT, MY MENAGERIE! AND SEE THAT THIS TIME HE IS ***STOPPED!***

THEN E'EN AS I PURSUED HIM, THEY DID PURSUE *ME!*

AND NOW I BE SORELY BESET BY RAGING MAN-BEASTS...

--YET SORELY RELUCTANT, TOO, TO INJURE THE INNOCENT MORTALS UNDER THE MYTH-MASKS!

THUS, HOW MAY I PIERCE THE DILEMMA AND--

WAIT! SURELY THE CHALICE ITSELF IS THE KEY!

THE SPELL BY WHICH HE HOLDS THEM IN THRALL WAS LONG AGO *FOCUSED* THROUGH THE CHALICE!

THUS, IF I EXERT MY POWER AS LORD OF STORMS TO SUMMON DOWN THE LIGHTNING...

SHRAAAK

THE SILVER CHALICE! IT IS DESTROYED!

AND THE CREATURES OF MYTH, WITH THE SOULS OF INNOCENT MORTALS, CRUMPLE INSTANTLY TO THE PIER...!

NO...

NO--!

NOOOO

'TIS *THY* FAULT, FARBAUTI! THOU ART TO BLAME AS MUCH AS I, CRUEL STRIKER-- *MORE* THAN I! 'TIS *THY* FAULT!

AND THOU, THOR--WITH A SINGLE CALLOUS BOLT FROM THE SKY, THOU HAST DESTROYED MY EVERY HOPE AND DREAM!

THERE BE NOTHING LEFT FOR ME NOW, THUNDERER--

--NAUGHT BUT THE BITTER SATISFACTION OF THY DESTRUCTION UNDER MY SORCEROUS BLADE!

AYE, CRUEL STRIKER, I'VE HEARD MUCH FROM THE DWARVES ABOUT THY MAGIC SWORD...

BUT STILL I DO DOUBT THAT IT CAN COMPARE WITH THE POWER OF MINE URU HAMMER *MJOLNIR!*

BRATCH

PROVE ME WRONG, CRUEL STRIKER!

STRIKE ME IF THOU CANST!

OR BE STRICKEN *THYSELF* -- BY THE *RIGHTEOUS WRATH OF THOR THE MIGHTY!*

THOOM

PLASH

AND THE THUNDER GOD ALREADY KNOWS THAT FARBAUTI-RIMTHURSAR, CRUEL STRIKER, KEEPER OF A FALLEN MENAGERIE, HAS BEEN STRUCK A BLOW FROM WHICH HE WILL NOT RISE.

RETRIEVING HIS FOE FROM THE COLD WATERS OF LAKE MICHIGAN, AND RETURNING TO THE SHADOWED BODIES SPRAWLED ON THE WEATHERED PIER, THOR IS ASSAILED BY A HEAVINESS OF HEART AND A BLEAKNESS OF SPIRIT WHICH NO MORTAL MAY EVER KNOW...

FIRST I DID WRONGLY ACCUSE MY BROTHER LOKI AND NOW...

...AND NOW... THIS.

I... I THOUGHT BY SHATTERING THE CHALICE... THE SPELL WOULD BE BROKEN... AND THEY WOULD MERELY TRANSFORM TO THEIR MORTAL FORMS...

INSTEAD... MY ACTION HAS... SLAIN THEM...

OHHH...

ALIVE--! THEY BE *ALIVE!* BUT THEN-- WAS I RIGHT?!

DID THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CHALICE RESTORE THEM TO THEIR TRUE MORTAL FORMS--?

WHAT ART *THOU* GAPING AT, THUNDER GOD? WHERE BE THE HUMOR THY FACE MIRRORS?

OHH... MY HEAD...

THOR! THOU ART MORE GOLDEN THAN EVER! COME TO MY ARMS AND LET US DRINK THE ECSTASY DIVINE!

YE BE HARDLY MORTAL, THEN--BUT AT LEAST ALIVE...

DO YE REMEMBER NOTHING?

WAIT... FARBAUTI... WHO WAS IN TRUTH... RIMTHURSAR...

AND WHO REINFORCED HIS ANCIENT SPELL OF THRALLDOM!

AYE--AND CAUSED YE TO SEEK MY DEATH IN HIS SERVICE.

IT WAS AWFUL, THOR-- HAVING TO OBEY HIM AGAINST OUR WILL...

...FORCED TO ATTACK YOU WHEN OUR TRUE URGE WAS TO SPILL *HIS* BLOOD...

BUT THANK ODIN IT'S OVER NOW--AND WE'RE BACK TO NORMAL!

NORMAL--?! BUT THOU ART STILL *BEASTS*--AND NOW THE CHALICE IS *DESTROYED!*

THERE BE NO WAY TO CHANGE YOU BACK TO MORTALS!

HE'S RIGHT-- WE BE TRAPPED IN OUR PRESENT FORMS FOR-EVER!

AYE, TRAPPED IN OUR STRONG, LUSTY, LARGER-THAN-LIFE FUN-LOVING FORMS!

YAYYY

HURRAH

THOR'S FACE MOMENTARILY DARKENS WITH IRE... BUT THEN THE THUNDER GOD RELAXES, LETTING THE EMOTION EBB...

AT THIS POINT, WHAT'S THE USE--?

LET US QUAFF ALE IN CELEBRATION, FRIEND THOR! OR WOULDST THOU PREFER CHANGING TO THE MORTAL DONALD BLAKE FIRST--?

AYE--CHANGE TO BLAKE! HE'S MORE FUN!

I... I GIVE UP.

FOR NOW, AT LEAST.

BUT HEAR ME, AND MARK MY WORDS WELL--

--MIDGARD SHALL BE PLAGUED WITH THY PRESENCE NO MORE--

--E'EN MUST I CHALLENGE ALL-FATHER ODIN HIMSELF!

BUT THE OMINOUS WORDS FALL ON STRANGELY SHAPED EARS DEAFENED BY JOY.

NEXT ISSUE

THE CONCLUSION OF THE MENAGERIE SAGA IN...

THE WRATH AND THE POWER!

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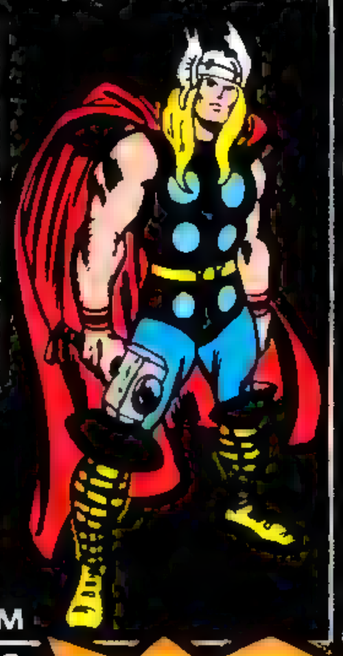

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THE MIGHTY

THOR™

TO FIGHT A FRIEND! THOR VERUS HEIMDALL GUARDIAN OF THE RAINBOW BRIDGE!

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR— and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning— and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

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THE WRATH AND THE POWER!

CHICAGO'S YACHT BASIN: THE SILVER CHALICE OF DEFEATED FARBAUTI-RIMTHURSAR LIES IN GLEAMING SHARDS...

THE NORSE ICON HAS BEEN USED TO TRANSFORM FIVE ORDINARY MORTALS INTO A FABLED ASGARDIAN MENAGERIE -- **KYRIE** THE FALCON-WOMAN, **BORNA** THE BEAR, **GRULT** THE BULL-MAN, **SLITHGARN** THE SERPENT, AND **FAIRGOLD** THE MERMAID--AND IF IT NOW LIES SHATTERED...

...THEN WE MUST KEEP OUR PRESENT FORMS!

AYE-- AND REMAIN HERE ON MIDGARD TO REAP SUCH VAST PLEASURES AS PRESENT THEMSELVES!

NAY!

A SINGLE WORD... BUT WHEN VOICED BY **THOR**, IT CONVEYS THE POWER OF THUNDER.

GRULT, ART THOU NOT ASHAMED? THY PRESENT MIEN OF POWER AND FEROCITY MAY SERVE WELL IN THY CHOSEN PURSUIT OF DEBAUCHERY-- BUT WHAT OF MEEK THORNE KIRBY, HE WHOSE FACE AND FORM LIES SUPPRESSED UNDER THY FURY?

AND FAIRGOLD, THOU WERT ONCE NURSE STEVENS, SHE WHO DEVOTED HERSELF TO EASING THE SUFFERING OF OTHERS. CANST THOU TRULY SAY THAT THY PRESENT LECHEROUS FORM IS MORE WORTHY OR IMPORTANT?

AND THOU, BORNA--WHAT OF THE COMMON MORTAL WHOSE FACE AND FORM *THOU* HAST USURPED? SHOULD HIS CHANCE FOR NOBILITY--AYE, AND FOR LIFE ITSELF--LIE VICTIM TO THY SELFISH NEED?

AND SLITHGARN-- LIKE BORNA, THOU WERT A COMMON WORKER, A "MOVER", BUT CANST THOU TRULY SAY THAT SUCH A MEAN OCCUPATION RENDERS THE MAN UNWORTHY OF SALVATION?

AND THOU, KYRIE... THY SHAME SHOULD TRANSCEND THAT OF ALL OTHERS. WHAT OF SHAWNA LYNDE, THE DOCTOR WHO HAS SHOWN SO MUCH KINDNESS TO DONALD BLAKE? BESIDES, THOU ART THE ONE WHO HAS CHANGED THE LEAST--WHO REMEMBERS MOST THY FORMER MORTAL LIFE...

ART THOU NOT *ASHAMED?*

THOR IS RIGHT-- WE *MUST* SACRIFICE OUR ASGARDIAN FORMS, THAT OUR FORMER MORTAL SELVES MAY RESUME THEIR NORMAL LIVES.

AYE... WE SHALL PROTEST NO MORE, THUNDER GOD.

SO BE IT-- I SHALL LEAVE THEE HERE ON MIDGARD WHILST I RETURN FARBAUTI TO ASGARD... AND PETITION ALLFATHER *ODIN* FOR AID.

BUT EVEN AS THE STRANGE GROUP MOVES FROM THE DOCKS...

HOLD IT, THOR!

WE... UH... WE KNOW YOU'RE A GOOD GUY AND ALL, BUT YOU'VE GOTTA UNDERSTAND *OUR* POSITION. AND YOU DO HAVE SOME MIGHTY HEAVY EXPLAINING TO DO...

POLICE

YOU AND THOSE OTHER... AH, FREAKS... WILL JUST HAVE TO BE TAKEN INTO CUSTODY, SO WE CAN--!

"FREAKS"--?!

DID YON BLUE-CLAD MORTAL *DARE* CALL US "FREAKS"?!

I WARN THEE, GRULT--STAY THY HAND, LEST I BE FORCED TO *BREAK* IT!

BUT WOULD THOR HAD *ALSO* WARNED BORNA...

AYE... AND FOR VOICING SUCH DIRE CALUMNY--!

BIND HIS FOUL TONGUE IN KNOTS, BORNA!

I SAY THEE *NAY!*

IF I CANNOT TRUST THEE TO RESIST THE TEMPTATIONS OF TROUBLE HERE ON MIDGARD--

-- THEN BY THE ENCHANTED POWER OF MINE URU HAMMER *MJOLNIR*--

"-- I SHALL TRANSPORT US *ALL* ACROSS THE YAWNING VOID TO ASGARD!"

HUH--?! WH-WHERE... DID... THEY... GO?

AT THIS MOMENT, IN THE HINTERLANDS OF ASGARD, THE OBJECT OF THOR'S FLIGHT-- ODIN HIMSELF--SITS ASTRIDE EIGHT-LEGGED SLEIPNIR...

... WATCHING, HIS ONE EYE CLOUDED WITH WEARY DISMAY, AS A FIERCE BATTLE UNFOLDS BEFORE HIM.

STILL THE MEANINGLESS FIGHT RAGES, WREAKING TERRIBLE HAVOC ON BOTH SIDES OF THE RIVER. MUST MY REALM BE FOREVER CURSED BY SUCH MADNESS?

AND WOULD THAT MY FORMER LOVE JOLENA WERE NOT THE LEADER OF ONE FACTION... FOR HOW MAY I NOW INTERVENE WITH ANY SEMBLANCE OF IMPARTIAL JUSTICE?

IF ONLY MY SCOUT CAN RETURN THROUGH THE LINES OF COMBAT, MAYHAP THERE WILL BE SOME HOPE FOR--

I COME WITH NEWS OF MY SPYING, ALL-FATHER! THE WAR HAS BEEN CAUSED BY A SCHEMING GROUP OF CONSPIRATORS FROM BOTH SIDES!

THEY ARE IN LEAGUE TO MANIPULATE ENMITY ON BOTH SIDES OF THE RIVER--AND HAVE TRIGGERED THE CONFLICT, HOPING TO DRAW THEE INTO IT!

ME?! THEY SEEK TO INVOLVE ME PERSONALLY IN THE STRIFE?!

AYE-- THUS COULD THEY MAKE A CASE OF THY CONTINUING LOVE FOR JOLENA AND THY INFIDELITY TO THY WIFE *FRIGGA*, THUS DISCREDITING THEE IN THE EYES OF ALL ASGARD.

BLASPHEMY! MY LOVE FOR FRIGGA IS *TRUE!*

AYE, ALL-FATHER, BUT THE TRUTH RESIDES IN THY HEART ALONE.

"...AND FAILING IN THEIR ORIGINAL SCHEME, THEY HOPE THE CONFLICT WILL ESCALATE UNTIL THY *ARMY*-- NOT JUST THEE-- IS INVOLVED...

"... THEREBY LEAVING THE PALACE ROYAL OPEN AND UNGUARDED, FOR SWIFT USURPATION."

THEN... BY MY HIGH STATION I AM THWARTED!

TO ACT IS FOLLY... AND TO HOLD MY ACTIONS, WORSE.

THERE IS NO WAY FOR ME TO WIN... NO WAY TO DO ANYTHING, WITHOUT LOSING.

AND EVEN AS ODIN SPEAKS WITH DARKENED HEART--

--THOR'S JOURNEY ENDS ON THE RAINBOW BRIDGE BIFROST...

STAND ASIDE, HEIMDALL-- I MEAN TO ENTER WITH PRISONER AND COMPANIONS.

AND I TELL THEE AGAIN, THOR*-- MORTALS ARE DENIED ENTRANCE TO ASGARD WITHOUT ODIN'S LEAVE...

...AND SINCE THY MENAGERIE ARE PART-MORTAL--!

** THE FIRST TIME WAS LAST ISSUE.*

AYE-- BUT I MEAN TO *BREAK* THE RULE THIS TIME, GOOD HEIMDALL! THE PROBLEM VEXING ME HAS GONE ON TOO LONG, AND I MEAN TO SOLVE IT IN DIRECT PETITION TO ODIN...

... WHEREVER ODIN MAY BE-- IN HIS PALACE, OR IN THE HINTERLANDS EMBROILED IN SOME MISGUIDED WAR!

AS GUARDIAN OF THE RAINBOW BRIDGE LEADING TO SHINING ASGARD, I MUST *DENY* THY INTENTIONS!

ASIDE, I SAY, FOR THE LAST TIME, FRIEND HEIMDALL--

--LEST YE FORCE ME TO RAISE HAMMER 'GAINST THEE -- LIKE SO!

FRAK

SO BE IT, THUNDERER! IF THOU MUST FORCE US INTO BATTLE, THEN LET US FIGHT TILL THE STARS FALL FROM THE SKIES!

BUT TO BOTH GODS, IT IS IMMEDIATELY APPARENT THAT THE FIGHT IS TRAGICALLY WRONG.

WHANK

STUBBORN AND STRONG-WILLED THEY BOTH MAY BE, BUT THEY ARE STILL FRIENDS AND ALLIES...

...NOT ENEMIES SWORN...

...AND SO, AFTER NO MORE THAN A DOZEN BLOWS HAVE BEEN STRUCK, HEIMDALL LOWERS HIS WEAPON--A GOD ABRUPTLY EMERGING FROM TRAGIC NIGHTMARE...

ENOW! 'TIS MADNESS! NOT EVEN THE SACRED POWER OF MY CHARGE CAN AGAIN MAKE ME LIFT MY HAND 'GAINST THEE, THOR!

PASS ON, THUNDERER, AND IF ODIN LOOKS UPON THY ACTION WITH DISPLEASURE, I WILL GLADLY BEAR THE BRUNT OF HIS WRATH...

...RATHER THAN PROLONG THIS FOLLY OF ARMS WITH THE NOBLE SCION OF ASGARD!

I THANK THEE, FRIEND HEIMDALL--

--AND I BID THEE USE THY HORN TO SUMMON JAILERS, THAT THEY MAY TAKE MY PRISONER FARBAUTI INTO CHARGE.

'TWILL BE DONE, THUNDERER.

DEEP WITHIN ASGARD, A LULL IN THE FIGHTING OCCURS WHILE SURVIVORS RETREAT TO THEIR RESPECTIVE SIDES OF THE RIVER, THERE TO LICK THEIR WOUNDS...

...AND THE WRAITHLIKE VALKYRIES DESCEND ON THE DEAD AND THE DYING, WHISPERING OF THE SWEET LIFE WAITING BEYOND IN VALHALLA...

BUT THERE BE NO HONOR IN THIS WAR--AND THE REWARD BEYOND WILL ECHO BOTH HOLLOW AND MOCKING! 'TIS A TRAVESTY MOST PROFANE-- AND AN END MUST BE PUT TO IT! BUT... HOW--?

MAYHAP I CAN GIVE THEE AID, MY FATHER...

THOR--?! HERE? BUT I THOUGHT THY HEART NOW BELONGED TO *MIDGARD*.

'TIS ABOUT MIDGARD I'VE COME TO SPEAK. THESE... BEINGS IN MY COMPANY REPRESENT THE ANCIENT MENAGERIE OF FARBAUTI THE CRUEL-STRIKER, HE WHO WAS ONCE CALLED RIMTHURSAR.

THEY HAVE USURPED THE FORMS OF FIVE MORTALS ON MIDGARD AND--

WHAT?! YOU MEAN THEY BE-- MORTALS?!

AYE, ALL-FATHER... PART MORTALS.

AND THOU DARED USHER THEM TO THE REALM ETERNAL WITHOUT MY LEAVE?!

AWAY WITH THEE-- I SHALL DEAL WITH THY INSOLENT PERFIDY LATER! FOR THE NONCE, I HAVE TROUBLES ENOW OF MY OWN!

AWAY WITH THEE!!

WHAT TROUBLES, MY FATHER?

NAY-- IF MY FATHER IS BESET WITH TROUBLES I MUST KNOW OF IT!

THOUGH I HAVE CHOSEN TO MAKE MY HOME ON MIDGARD...

THAT-- AND MY CONCERN FOR THESE MORTALS-- DOES NOT LESSEN MY LOVE FOR ASGARD AND THE ALL-FATHER AN IOTA!

I BEG THEE, FATHER -- *TELL ME!* MAYHAP I CAN *AID!*

RISE. I COULD NEVER LONG HOLD IRE TOWARD MY FAVORED SON...

BUT I WARN THEE, THOR -- I'LL NOT FORGIVE THIS MATTER OF THE TRESPASSING MORTALS!

NOW -- EACH FACTION BELIEVES THE OTHER WISHES TO CROSS THE RIVER AND CLAIM THE OTHER'S LAND...

... WHEN IN TRUTH BOTH SIDES ARE CONTENT WITH THEIR OWN DOMAINS.

TWO *SMALL* GROUPS -- ONE ON EACH SIDE -- HAVE CONSPIRED TO CREATE THE CONFLICT. THEY ARE THOSE YOU SEE ON EACH SIDE DRESSED IN THE HIDES OF WOLVES.

THEY WEAR THE SKINS TO ENSURE THEY DO NOT STRIKE EACH OTHER DOWN. HOW MANY OF THE OTHERS FALL, THEY CARE NOT.

THEN YOU COME HERE SIMPLY TO SETTLE THEIR DISPUTE -- TO EXPOSE THOSE IN WOLVES' CLOTHING?

AYE, THAT AND MORE, MY SON, FOR 'TIS *NOT* SO SIMPLE.

I COULD USE MY VAST POWERS TO FORCE THEM TO HALT THEIR BATTLE... BUT WERE I TO ENTER THE FRAY, IT WOULD SPELL VICTORY FOR THE WOLF-WARRIORS.

BUT WHY, FATHER?

SEE THOU THE QUEEN *JOLENA* BELOW, SHE WHOM I ONCE LOVED... WERE I TO INTERCEDE NOW, IT WOULD BE TAKEN AS FAITHLESSNESS TO FRIGGA.

I CANNOT PUT MY WIFE -- NOR ASGARD -- THROUGH A PERIOD OF *SUCH* DOUBT AND STRIFE.

AND DOST THOU STILL LOVE FRIGGA-- SHE WHO RAISED ME AS HER NATURAL SON?

AYE, THOR... YET JOLENA HATH CARVED A NICHE IN MY HEART, TOO...

MERELY TO GAZE UPON HER FACE, TO HEAR HER VOICE ONE MORE TIME... I--

I TOO HAVE KNOWN THE PASSING FANCIES OF A NOBLE HEART, MY SIRE.

BUT WITH WHOM WOULDST THOU SPEND THY LIFE?

THE CHOICE WAS MADE LONG AGO, MY SON...

... AND I DID CHOOSE... FRIGGA.

THEN 'TWILL BE MY HONOR TO AID THEE, FATHER--

-- 'GAINST MASSED LEGIONS OF WOLF-WARRIORS!

AYE-- AND WE'LL HELP, TOO!

SECONDED! IT'S BEEN HOURS SINCE WE'VE HAD A DECENT FIGHT!

THY FAITH HONORS ME-- BUT *HOW* CANST THOU HELP? 'TIS WELL KNOWN THOU ART MY SON... AND FOR THEE TO ENTER THE FRAY WOULD HARDLY DENY MY INTER-FERENCE.

THEN LET *US* CLEAR THE RIVER OF BLOOD-- BY CRUSHING EVERY WOLFLING WARRIOR IN SIGHT!

THE ZEAL OF THY COMPANIONS IS ADMIRABLE, THOR--

-- INDEED WONDROUS FOR THOSE WHO TRULY BE MORTALS.

BUT THE LOGIC OF THEIR TACTICS LEAVES MUCH TO DESIRE. THE DAMAGE HAS BEEN DONE, AND CANNOT BE SIMPLY UNDONE BY THE DEATH OF THE WOLFLINGS...

AYE... AND YET, SAVE FOR THEIR LACK OF SUBTLETY, MY COMPANIONS HAVE CLEARLY DEFINED BOTH THE PROB-LEM AND THE GOAL...

WE MUST CROSS THE BATTLE-FIELD UNDETECTED, TO THE COVER OF YON FOREST BEYOND-- THEN FIND A WAY TO EXPOSE AND DEFEAT THE WOLFLINGS.

ONCE THEY ARE REVEALED FOR WHAT THEY ARE, THEIR PLAN WILL BE UNDONE!

KYRIE--CANST THOU PROVIDE A DISTRACTION?

AYE--WITH FAIRGOLD'S HELP.

YOU ENTER THE RIVER, FAIRGOLD, AND ONCE I FLY OVER YOUR SHADOW, RE-LEASE THE MAGIC OF YOUR GOLDEN SCALES.

OF COURSE, KYRIE-- I'D DO *ANYTHING* FOR HANDSOME THOR!

THEY BEGIN A NEW CLASH IN EARNEST! IF EVER THY BOLD SCHEME IS TO BE LAUNCHED, THE TIME IS NOW, ERE MORE LIVES ARE NEEDLESSLY LOST!

AYE! COME, FAIRGOLD-- THOU ART THE FIRST TO BEGIN.

IF I AM TO GO WITH THEE, THOR, I HOPE IT NEVER ENDS.

BUT AFTER MERE MOMENTS OF ECSTASY IN THOR'S BRAWNY ARMS, THE MERMAID OF THE GOLDEN SCALES IS DEPOSITED FAR UPRIVER...

START THE OTHERS, THOR-- I SHALL COMPLETE THE DOWNRIVER SWIM TO THE BATTLEFIELD IN A TWINKLING.

AND SO, WITH THE OTHERS WAITING BEHIND, KYRIE SWOOPS LOW OVER THE COMBATANTS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE RIVER.

EH--? SOME MANNER OF NEW VALKYRIE, COME TO TRANSPORT US TO VALHALLA?

NAY-- THOUGH MY NAME IS INDEED KYRIE, I KNOW NOTHING OF LIFE BEYOND IN VALHALLA...

RATHER, I AM THE KEEPER OF WEALTH AND HAPPINESS IN *THIS* LIFE!

VEERING OVER THE RIVER, SHE MAKES A DRAMATIC GESTURE WHICH IS IN FACT NO MORE THAN A SIGNAL TO WAITING FAIRGOLD...

BEHOLD-- AS I CONVERT THY DISPUTED RIVER INTO A FLOWING RIBBON OF *GOLD!*

NOW FAIRGOLD-- *NOW!*

UNDERWATER, FAIRGOLD PLUCKS A GOLDEN SCALE FROM HER TAIL...

DO THY SORCERY, CHARM OF GOLD-- TO AID GOLDEN THOR HIMSELF!

AND, ABOVE...

GOLD! THE RIVER HAS TURNED TO GOLD!

INSTANTLY, THE FIGHTING COMES TO A HALT, WEAPONS FALLING FROM HANDS EAGER TO SIFT GLITTERING DUST FROM SHIMMERING WATER.

QUICKLY--WE MAKE OUR STEALTHY MOVE *NOW*...

...WHILE THEY ARE TOO PREOCCUPIED WITH THEIR GREED AND THE ILLUSION OF GOLD TO NOTICE US!

USE THY HAMMER TO JOIN KYRIE, THOR--WE CAN MAKE OUR OWN WAY!

TO THE FOREST, KYRIE--AND THE SHELTER THERE-IN!

AYE, BUT NO NEED FOR HASTE, THOR...

THE GREED DAZZLING THEIR EYES CLOAKS US IN INVISIBILITY.

AND YET...

THE TRUCE WAS A BRIEF ONE!

NOW THEY FIGHT WITH TOOTH AND NAIL OVER THE RIVER'S GOLD, RATHER THAN THE LAND BOUNDING ITS BANKS!

AYE, BUT THE DISTRACTION HAS WELL SERVED ITS PURPOSE--THEY ARE STILL TOO PREOCCUPIED TO NOTICE US.

SOON, GATHERED ON THE RIVER IN THE FOREST...

NOW WHAT?

NOW, BORNA, WE WAIT... FOR--

"--NIGHTFALL."

"GOLD"--HAH! WHAT MANNER OF GOLD FADES AFTER BUT AN HOUR, LEAVING NOT EVEN DROSS?

AYE-- BUT WHAT WAS THE MEANING OF SUCH AN ILLUSION? THE HAND OF LOKI--OR SOME OTHER MAGICIAN? OR HAS ODIN FINALLY INTERCEDED, IN DEVIOUS MANNER?

FOOL! THAT IS WHAT WE GO NOW TO DISCUSS WITH OUR FELLOW WOLFLINGS ON THE OTHER SIDE!

AND BE SILENT-- LEST WE ARE SPOTTED AND UNCOVERED AS CONSPIRATORS!

THIS IS OUR CHANCE! SLITHGARN--HIE THEE TO QUEEN JOLENA AND FETCH HER BACK TO THIS GATHERING OF WOLVES, THAT SHE MAY HEAR THEIR TREACHERY WITH HER OWN EARS.

DONE, THUNDERER!

AND KYRIE--CANST THOU FETCH *UTHAR*, LEADER OF THE OTHER SIDE?

'TWILL BE A STRAIN, THOR--I AM MADE FOR FLIGHT NOT STRENGTH.

AND YET OUR SCHEME HAS UNFOLDED TOO FAR TO SUFFER *ANY* DEFEAT.

I SHALL DO AS YOU BID--AT ANY COST.

THE BEATING OF WINGS, A SUDDEN BLOTTING OF STARS, AND--

UHN! 'TIS EVEN HARDER THAN I IMAGINED!

WHO--?! PUT ME DOWN!

PLEASE--YOU MUST TRUST ME! I MEAN THEE NO HARM AND WOULD SAVE THY MEN'S LIVES!

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIVER, QUEEN JOLENA GAZES AT THE SILHOUETTE LINED ON THE HILL...

HOW STRONG ODIN LOOKS... AND HAS EVER LOOKED...

IF ONLY HE COULD DESCEND TO GIVE ME SUCCOR IN MY HOUR OF NEED...

WHO--?!

THE NAME IS SLITHGARN, MILADY, AND I HAVE KNOWL-EDGE FOR THEE...

...IF YE DARE PARTAKE OF IT.

FOLLOW ME--THIS WAY--QUICKLY!

WARY, AND WITH SWORD DRAWN, JOLENA SUCCUMBS TO THE MYSTERY...

AND, IN A SECLUDED GLADE NEARBY...

WE MUST IGNORE THE ILLUSION OF GOLD... OR, BETTER YET, WE SHALL RETURN TO JOLENA'S FORCES AND BRAND IT A TRICK CAUSED BY YOUR LEADER UTHAR.

AND *WE* SHALL RETURN TO UTHAR'S MEN AND BLAME IT ON *JOLENA*!

AYE--AND IN THIS WAY, WE USE THE HAPPENING TO ACTUALLY FURTHER OUR COMMON CAUSE!

I...I DARE NOT BELIEVE MINE EYES! FULLY HALF OF YON MEN BE IN MY SERVICE--

--AND YET THEY CONSPIRE WITH MEN FROM *JOLENA'S* FORCES!

BUT HOW LONG MAY WE HOPE TO PROLONG THIS DECEPTION? SOONER OR LATER, EITHER JOLENA OR UTHAR WILL BEGIN TO SUSPECT...

THE FOUL VILLAINS! THEY BE IN LEAGUE!

I *PROMISED* THEE HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE, JOLENA.

AYE, AND NOW THAT IT IS MINE--

--'TIS TIME TO BRING IT INTO THE *OPEN!*

JOLENA!

AND UTHAR AS WELL! WE ARE UNDONE!

NAY-- NOT IF WE SLAY BOTH LEADERS BEFORE THEY CARRY THE NEWS TO THEIR MEN!

STAND FAST, WOLF-LINGS--

--LEST YE BEAR THE BRUNT OF *MJOLNIR'S* MIGHT!

AT LAST! I BEGAN TO DESPAIR THAT OUR CUE WOULD NEVER SOUND!

YET, EVEN FACED WITH THE RIGHTEOUS MIEN OF THOR AND HIS MENAGERIE, THE WOLFLINGS CARRY OUT THEIR DESPERATE SURGE... UNTIL--

THOOM

NOW, COMRADES-- NOW MAY YE SATE THY THIRST FOR BATTLE!

BATTLE, THOR--?

BUT HOW MAY THEY DO BATTLE-- WITHOUT WEAPONS?

WHO--?!

WATCH THY STEP, WOLFLINGS--

OOOPH!

--FOR THE TONGUE OF SLITHGARN IS LONG ON MORE THAN CAUTION!

WE'VE LOST NO LOVE IN THE PAST, GRULT--

BASH

--BUT FOR ONCE OUR FURY WORKS IN TANDEM.

AYE, BORNA--MAYHAP THOU ART NOT SO BAD AFTER ALL!

AHA!

AT LAST THE WOLVES VENTURE TOO CLOSE TO THE RIVER--

--AND WILL SUFFER FOR IT WITH A SWIFT DUNKING!

AND FINALLY, AS THE SOUNDS OF RAGE FADE TO WEAK MOANS...

DID WE DO WELL, THOR?

AYE, FAIRGOLD-- LIKE WARRIORS BORN!

AND, WHEN THE DEFEATED WOLF-LINGS HAVE BEEN DRAGGED ONTO THE BATTLEFIELD, JOLENA AND UTHAR ADDRESS THEIR MEN...

THESE ARE THE ONES WHO HAVE SELFISHLY DECEIVED US, CAUSING A WAR WITHOUT REASON!

AYE--QUEEN JOLENA SPEAKS THE TRUTH!

OUR DISPUTE HATH BEEN MANUFACTURED AND MANIPULATED BY THOSE IN THE GUISE OF WOLVES-- AND HAVE NOW BEEN EXPOSED BY THESE FIVE MAGICAL BEINGS AND BY THOR, SON OF BELOVED ODIN!

LAY DOWN THY ARMS, IN PEACE!

BUT...CAN IT BE *TRUE*--?

NEVER WAS A TRUTH MORE RINGINGLY TOLD...

DID YE NOT HEAR JOLENA?! LAY DOWN THY WEAPONS-- THE TIME FOR BATTLE HATH ENDED!

'T-TIS TRUE! 'TIS THE ALL-FATHER HIMSELF!

AND AS WARRIORS OF BOTH FACTIONS FALL TO THEIR KNEES IN FEALTY...

JOLENA...

AYE, MY LOVE-- I AM HERE.

THEN APPROACH ME, FAIR QUEEN--FOR THE TROUBLE, AT LAST, IS ENDED.

AND AT THE SIGHT OF SUCH TENDERNESS, A GASP OF NEAR-HORROR ESCAPES FROM THE KNEELING WARRIORS...

HEAR ME, WARRIORS OF THE HINTERLANDS! YOU KNOW MY POWER IS VAST! SO IS MY LOVE! AND, LIKE ANY GOD, I MAY LOVE MORE THAN ONE WOMAN-- BUT HEED THIS WELL ...

THE FACT THAT I SHOW A TRACE OF MY FORMER LOVE FOR JOLENA DOES *NOT* MAKE ME UNFAITHFUL TO FRIGGA! IT MERELY MAKES ME... FALLIBLE.

INDEED I HAVE EVEN *LIED*. I TOLD THEE I WOULD NOT FORGIVE THY TRANSGRESSION, THOR, AND YET... WHAT ELSE MAY I NOW DO? THOU HAST VALIANTLY AIDED ME IN MY TROUBLES...

SO WHAT, THEN WAS *THY* TROUBLE WITH THESE MORTALS WHICH CAUSED THEE TO PETITION ME?

THEY WISH TO BE RESTORED FULLY TO THEIR TRUE MORTAL FORMS.

CAN THIS BE TRUE? THEY WOULD FORFEIT THEIR MAGICAL FORMS AND POWERS FOR THE DULL LIVES OF MORTALS?

TO THEIR EVERLASTING CREDIT, THERE IS BUT A MOMENT'S HESITATION...

THOR HAS SHOWN IT TO BE THE ONLY JUST COURSE.

AYE--AND THE SACRIFICE WILL BE NOBLE AT LEAST.

AND WHAT A WAY TO END OUR BRIEF EXISTENCES-- WITH THE BEST BATTLES WE'VE EVER TASTED!

THEN, WITH KYRIE SHEDDING A TEAR AND FAIRGOLD BLOWING A TRAGIC LAST KISS TO THOR, AND WITH THE OTHERS BRAVELY LIFTING THEIR HEADS TO THE ASGARDIAN SKY, ODIN SPEAKS WITH STERN AUTHORITY...

SO BE IT! WITH MY SCEPTER OF POWER I WORK THE DEED-- TRANSFORMING THEE FROM CREATURES OF MAGIC TO MORTALS OF NOBLE SACRIFICE!

THE BATTLEFIELD BLAZES WITH GLORIOUS LIGHT...

... AND WHEN THE LAMBIENT SHEEN FADES, THERE STANDS THORNE KIRBY, SHAWNA LYNDE, THE TWO MOVERS, AND NURSE STEVENS...

I...I NEVER REALIZED HOW TRULY... MEEK... A-AND MUNDANE... I WAS...

YES... AND ESPECIALLY HERE IN ASGARD--THE CHANGE, THE LOSS, IS ALL THE MORE EVIDENT... AND OPPRESSIVE.

HARD TO BELIEVE... THAT I WAS ACTUALLY A... A BEAUTIFUL MERMAID.

FEAR NOT -- FOR YE WILL REMEMBER NOTHING OF WHAT YE HAVE LOST!

ANOTHER PASS OF THE SCEPTER, AND THE FIVE MORTALS STAND FROZEN IN A TRANCE OF STATUES...

THEY WILL SEE AND HEAR NOTHING UNTIL THEY RETURN TO MIDGARD--AND THEN IT WILL ALL BE AS IF IT HAS NEVER PASSED.

AS FOR *THY* MEMORY, THOR, I BESEECH THEE... THINK NO LESS OF ME FOR MY UNCONTROLLABLE LOVE.

NAY... MINE IS NOT TO QUESTION HE WHO TRANSCENDS ALL OTHERS... FOR THINE IS THE GLORY AND THE POWER.

FAREWELL, MY FATHER.

THEN, WHIRLING HIS ENCHANTED HAMMER, THOR TRANSPORTS HIS FIVE COMPANIONS FROM THE FORMER BATTLEFIELD...

HOME, MJOLNIR-- PAST THE RAINBOW BRIDGE AND BEYOND-- TO MIDGARD!

FAREWELL, BRAVE HEIMDALL--

--AND FEAR THE BRUNT OF NO WRATH! IF ANYTHING, THOU WILT ENDURE A SURFEIT OF LOVE.

AS I SUSPECTED, FRIEND THOR-- FARE THEE WELL!

EPILOGUE: SOON, IN THE MICHIGAN AVENUE OFFICES OF DR. DONALD BLAKE'S NEW CHICAGO PRACTICE...

THERE--NOW ALL FIVE ARE ARRANGED AS THEY WERE BEFORE THIS MADNESS OF MENAGERIES DID BEGIN.

ALL THAT REMAINS IS THE TRANSFORMATION TO THE MORTAL BLAKE...

AND, IN A CLASH OF THUNDER, AS HAMMER STRIKES FLOOR...

BOOM

IT WORKED--THEY CAME BACK TO LIFE AS SOON AS I CHANGED!

LD BLAKE M.D.

AH! MY NEW OFFICE FURNITURE! JUST SET IT ANYWHERE, MEN--IF I DON'T LIKE THE ARRANGEMENT, I'LL CHANGE IT LATER.

EXCUSE ME, I'M NURSE STEVENS--I'VE COME TO SEE ABOUT THE POSITION, AVAILABLE...

YES--HERE'S DR. BLAKE NOW.

GLAD TO MEET YOU, MS. STEVENS-- WE'LL CONDUCT THE INTERVIEW IN MY INNER OFFICE.

UH... DOCTOR? EXCUSE ME, BUT I... I'M THORNE KIRBY. I... I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOU.

YOU SEE, I... I'M AFRAID I'M... WELL, I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO ASSERT MYSELF...

YES, DOCTOR LYNDE-- IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK TO NORMAL... WITH MY OWN PRACTICE I MEAN. *VERY* GOOD.

YOUR FIRST PATIENT, DOCTOR BLAKE.

BY THE WAY, DINNER TONIGHT, SHAWNA?

DELIGHTED, DON!

AND ALL IS WELL, FOR A RARE CHANGE, ON TWO WORLDS.

NEXT: *an* UNTOLD TALE *of* THOR'S YOUTH!

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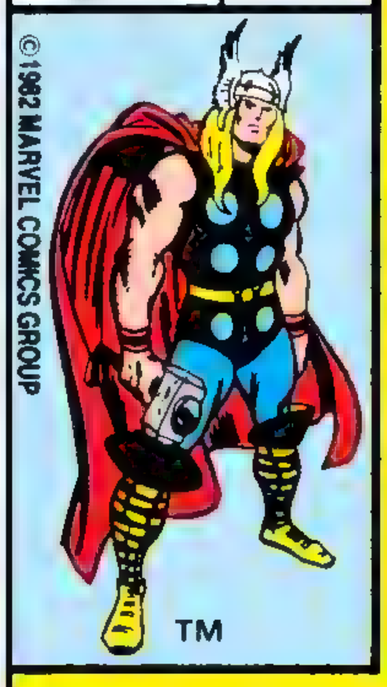

THE MIGHTY

THOR™

MIGHTY WARRIORS WERE THEY ONCE -- NOW ALL TURNED TO STONE!!

HANNIGAN & COLLETTA

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

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...COMES A DARK STRANGER!

IN THE CENTURIES BEFORE THE MIGHTY THOR WAS FULLY GROWN, HE WAS EAGER TO PROVE HIS COURAGE, STRENGTH, AND BATTLE PROWESS IN ANY WAY HE COULD. AND SO, ON THIS LONG-AGO DAY, THOR GALLOPS FORTH TO THE VERY FRONTIER OF THE ETERNAL REALM IN SEARCH OF ADVENTURE, ACCOMPANIED BY MISCHIEVOUS LOKI AND HIS FRIENDS...

THE STORM AND THESE STRANGE WOODS FRIGHTEN THE HORSES!

FEAR NOT, GRIM HOGUN! MY BROTHER IS GOD OF THUNDER!

'TIS HIS PARLOR GAME TO HALT STORMS!

HOW NOW, DEAR THOR? DOTH THE TEMPEST SCARE THEE ALSO? WHERE IS THE COURAGE THAT THOU SO OFTEN BOAST OF?

THOU ART GOD OF MISCHIEF, LOKI, AND SEEK TO GOAD ME!

YET IN ONE THING, THOU ART RIGHT...

TO SIMPLY STOP THE RAIN WOULD BRING LITTLE GLORY TO THE NAME OF THOR, SON OF ODIN!

BY FORCE OF ARM ALONE, I SHALL RESCUE US FROM THE STORM'S FURY!

THOOM!

AND WHO SHALL RESCUE US FROM THEE?

FLEE, FRIENDS! TERROR HATH DRIVEN MY BROTHER TO MADNESS! HE SEEKS TO KILL US ALL IN HIS PANIC!

HA! METHINKS THOU KNOWEST FEAR THYSELF, LOKI!

NAY! YET WHILST THOU PLAYEST THY SELF-SERVING GAMES, WE BECAME DRENCHED!

AS ALWAYS, LOOK TO THOR FOR SUCCOR! MINE IS THE POWER...

WHAM!

...AND NONE WHO LIVE IN ASGARD OR MIDGARD--SAVE THE ALL-FATHER *LORD ODIN* HIMSELF-- MAY STAND LONG AGAINST ME!

BEHOLD, FRIENDS! A SHELTER!

BROTHER, THOU ART EVER THE BLUSTERER, AND GO TO GREAT LENGTHS TO DO WHAT ANOTHER WOULD DO MOST SIMPLY!

EH?

SILENCE, LOKI!

SEEK NOT TO TRY MY PATIENCE, UNGRATEFUL ONE!

AIEEE! ALL THE WORLD TREMBLES BEFORE THOR'S WRATH!

YET I HAVE STOPPED THE STORM, FOR YOUR SAKES!

HOW GRACIOUS OF YOU, BROTHER.

RISE, LOKI! THOU ART OF ROYAL FAMILY, AND SHOULD NOT GROVEL IN THE DIRT!

TRY TO MATCH ME IN COURAGE, THOUGH THOU CAN NOT EQUAL MY POWER!

WE SHALL ONE DAY PUT THAT NOTION TO THE TEST!

EH? BROTHER! BEHIND THEE!

WHAT GIVES THEE MASKS OF FRIGHT, COMRADES? IS NOT THOR HERE TO PROTECT--?

WAIT! A DARK CLOUD, THOUGH MY WILL HATH BANISHED THE STORM!

THEN THOU ART FEEBLE IN THY WILL, THOR--FOR THE STORM STRIKES!

PERFIDY!

BY ODIN! IN THE BOLT--A *FORM*...

WHO GOES THERE?

WHO DARES WALK THE BORDERS OF MY DOMAIN?

YOU HAVE THE LOOK OF *ODIN'S* WHELPS! DOES HE NOW UNLEASH HIS KENNEL AGAINST ME...

...WHOM HE HIMSELF COULD NOT DEFEAT? WILL YOU TEST YOUR POWER AGAINST MINE?

SPEAK OR STEP FORTH, YOU ILL-BRED BOYS!

WE MEAN NO DISRESPECT, SIR...

ART THOU A MERE BRAGGART, BROTHER, THAT THOU WILT NOT DEFEND ASGARD'S HONOR? THOU SHALT LOSE FACE WITH THE OTHERS!

HA! IS THIS THE STUFF OF ASGARD? WILL NONE MEET ME, SINEW AGAINST SINEW?

GO, HATED BROTHER! THY HUMILIATION SHALL BE MY GLORY!

MOCK NOT ASGARD OR ODIN, DARK ONE! THOR SHALL BEST THEE...

...OR PERISH, LITTLE GOD!

STRIKE THE FIRST BLOW, AND STRIKE IT WELL!

FOR I WILL STRIKE THE SECOND BLOW--AND THE ODIN-WHELP WILL STRIKE NO MORE!

BASE LIAR!

CRUNCH!

ZOUNDS!

WELL MET, MY FRIEND! LONG SHALL WE SING OF THIS DAY IN ASGARD!

BUT... I STRUCK TO CHASTISE, NOT TO SLAY!

NOR DID YOU, THOUGH THE BLOW WAS A WORTHY ONE!

NOW, BY THE TERMS OF THE MATCH, YOU MUST LAY YOURSELF OPEN TO *MY* STRENGTH-- OR BE DISHONORED!

BUT NOT NOW... NOT HERE...

WHEN, THEN? WHERE SHALL THOR FACE THEE?

INCITE HIM NOT, MY FRIEND!

TO MY LANDS IN THE UNKNOWN NORTH SHALL YOU HIE, THERE TO LEARN YOUR FATE WHEN NEXT WE MEET!

HE FLEES, BROTHER! THOU HAST WON!

NAY! THE DARK ONE BUT TOYS WITH ME, AND THINKS ME AFRAID TO FOLLOW!

FRIEND, IT IS SAID THAT ONLY ALL-FATHER ODIN HATH ENTERED THAT REGION AND RETURNED!

IS THOR NOT HIS FATHER'S SON, FANDRAL?

CAN I NOT DEAL WITH THIS DARK TRICKSTER?

TO HORSE, LOKI! THOU SHALT ACCOMPANY ME, AND BEAR WITNESS TO ALL WHO ASKED THAT THOR NE'ER SHIRKED A CHALLENGE!

AS YOU WISH IT.

RETURN TO ASGARD, THE REST OF THEE, AND TELL OUR FATHER WHAT HATH OCCURRED!

WITH LUCK, I'LL NOT BRING BACK TALES OF THY VICTORY--

--BUT OF THY PASSING!

WHAT, HOGUN? DO WE JUST LET THEM GO?

HAVE YOU THE MUSCLE TO HOLD THOR, ONCE HIS WILL HATH SPURRED HIM ON HIS COURSE?

I HAVE NOT! I PRAY THOR WILL BE SAFE, AND AS WARY OF HIS COMPANION AS OF THE DARK MAN!

THREE DAYS LATER, NEAR THE NORTHERN EDGE OF ASGARD...

I... LIKE NOT THE LOOK OF THIS PLACE, THOR!

LET US HASTEN BACK TO ASGARD, BEFORE WE LOSE OUR WAY. I WILL TELL TALES OF THY GREAT BATTLES--AND NONE SHALL BE THE WISER!

NAY! THY LIES WOULD MEAN NOTHING, FOR I COULD NOT IN GOOD CONSCIENCE LEND THEM SUBSTANCE!

FOR GOOD OR ILL, I WOULD SEE THIS MATTER THROUGH!

THOUGH I AM LOATH TO ADMIT IT, FEAR EATS AT MINE OWN SOUL! 'TIS TOO STRANGE A COUNTRY, AND WITH NARY AN INHABITANT.

SLY LOKI MUST NOT LEARN MY DEEPEST FEELINGS, FOR SURELY HE WOULD TURN THEM AGAINST ME.

BY ASGARD'S GLEAMING SPIRES!

A BRIDGE OF GOLD, WHICH RIVALS THE RAINBOW IN ITS GLORY! AND ON THE OTHER SIDE...

GLANCE BELOW, BROTHER! NONE COULD SURVIVE A PLUNGE INTO THAT CREVICE!

THREATEN OR CAJOLE AS THOU WOULDST-- LOKI GOES NO FARTHER!

SUDDENLY...

HEED THY BROTHER, THUNDER LORD! THESE ARE MY HUSBAND'S LANDS--AND NONE CROSS THIS BRIDGE E'RE THEY PASS BY ME!

OTHERS HAVE PASSED THIS WAY-- BUT NONE LIKE THEE, I THINK!

WHAT IS THY BUSINESS? SPEAK!

WE... SEEK THE *DARK MAN!*

FORGET HIM-- I COULD DO THE BETTER FOR THEE!

BEWARE THE WITCH, BROTHER!

OR SUCCUMB TO HER! I CARE NOT WHICH!

MY HUSBAND IS ABROAD THESE MANY DAYS--AND I WOULD *PLEASE* THEE...

STAY WITH ME, BEAUTIFUL GOD...

THE DARK MAN WILL NOT MISS THEE!

NAY! THE DARK MAN HATH MY WORD THAT I SHALL APPEAR!

THOUGH MY HEART MAY YEARN FOR THEE, I CANNOT STRAY FROM MY QUEST!

LOKI!

FEAR DRIVES HIM BACK, AS IT DRIVES YOU ONWARD!

I SHALL REMEMBER THEE, SORCERESS, FOR THOU HAST DAMAGED MINE HONOR IN MY BROTHER'S EYES!

WHEN MY QUEST IS O'ER, I SHALL RETURN-- AND THEN, PERHAPS, I SHALL TRY THY FAVORS!

HONOR IS SUCH A PETTY THING, YET MEN AND GODS DO MAKE SUCH SHADOWPLAY OVER IT--AND THEREBY MASK THEIR MOTIVES!

THINK NO THOUGHTS OF RETURN, YOUNG THUNDERER!

THIS BRIDGE WAS NOT BUILT TO BEAR YOU, WHO ART HEAVY WITH THE BREATH OF LIFE!

KRA-A-ACK!

MY STEED IS FALLEN--AND THOUGH I MIGHT REACH YON WALL, 'TIS SHEER AND WITHOUT MASS TO GRIP!

YET AM I GOD OF STRENGTH, AS WELL AS THUNDER! IF THE WALL ALLOWS NO HANDHOLDS--

--I SHALL MAKE MINE OWN!

THOU CLINGEST WELL TO LIFE, FOR ONE WHO LOVES HER NOT!

EH?! THE WOMAN!

I KNOW NOT HOW THOU REACHED THIS EDGE OF THE CHASM, WOMAN, BUT--

HA! HA! HA!

NO PLACE IS FORBIDDEN TO ME! AT THE HOUR OF THY DEATH, THOU WILT PLEAD FOR ME TO COME TO THEE!

BUT HARK! THY FATE PASSES THEE, YOUNG THUNDER!

MY FATE--? HER WORDS ARE MOST CRYPTIC!

FROM THE DISTANCE, A SOUND-- LIKE THE BEATING DIRGE OF FUNEREAL DRUMS!

BA-DOOM! BA-DOOM!

THE DARK MAN!

BA-DOOM! BA-DOOM!

HE PASSES BY-- WITHOUT A GLANCE!

HALT, KNAVE!

I HAVE NOT COME SO FAR TO BE FURTHER MOCKED BY--

-- THEE?!

HEIMDALL'S EYES!

A PRIMORDIAL EDIFICE, BUILT IN THE SIDE OF A SLOPE AS THE GNOMES MAKE THEIR DWELLINGS!

SURELY NO GNOME LIVES IN THIS PLACE!

THE SIZE OF THESE DOORS DECLARES THAT HERE IS THE STRONGHOLD OF THE DARK MAN, OR ONE AS MONSTROUS!

NO DOOR, HOWEVER HUGE, SHALL E'ER RESIST THE GOD OF THUNDER!

BUT WHAT IS THIS--?!

STATUARY OF HEROES, BY THEIR LOOK!

YET... ALL FACES ARE TWISTED INTO MASKS OF TERROR! 'TIS MOST CHILLING...

HEROES ALL THEY WERE-- ERE I FELLED THEM!

MIGHTY OAKS THEY WERE-- YET MY AX BROUGHT THEM LOW!

I PROMISED TO STRIKE YOU A BLOW, ODIN-WHELP! TAKE IT!

SUDDENLY FROM THE SHADOWS...

NO!

THIS ONE SHALL NOT BELONG TO THEE, HUSBAND!

I AM OLDER THAN THE GODS, WOMAN! ALL FALL TO ME IN TIME!

THOU ART LOSING THY TOUCH, HUSBAND-- THIS ONE STILL BREATHES! AS HE LIVES, HE SHALL BE A TROPHY NOT IN THY HALL--

-- BUT IN MINE! *SLEEP*, YOUNG THUNDERER-- THE SLEEP OF ETERNITY AWAITS THEE!

STATUE THOU SHALT BE-- WITH JUST A KISS!

HA! WHICH OF US LOSES OUR TOUCH, WIFE? BLOODIED, SENSELESS, HE YET REJECTS YOUR SPELL...

DOTH HE? THOUGH SLOWLY, HIS LIMBS DO TURN TO STONE!

ALL BEINGS SEEK YOU IN THEIR HEARTS. YET WHAT OF THE SOUL--?

AWAKEN, YOUNG THUNDERER-- AND TELL US!

EH?

THOU ART WOUNDED, ODIN-SON! LET ME HEAL THEE!

AWAY, WOMAN! THOR MUST BATTLE... FOR HIS HONOR...

WHAT?! ART THOU NOT AFRAID OF DEATH?

AYE--YET THERE ARE THINGS WORSE THAN DEATH!

YOU SEE, WIFE? ALL BEINGS SEEK YOU-- BUT THEY COME TO ME!

TAKE THIS FOOLISH YOUNG GOD, THEN! I WASH MY HANDS OF HIM!

SPARE ME THY RIDDLES!

I HAVE WITHSTOOD MUCH FROM THEE, DARK ONE! I WOULD REPAY THEE--WITH BATTLE!

SPLENDID!

HAVE AT YOU, ASGARDIAN!

AND CURSED BE HIM WHO FIRST CRIES FOR MERCY!

SKWAM!

SILENCE! THOU DOST CURSE THYSELF!

WELL MET!

OF ALL I HAVE FOUGHT, ONLY ONE OTHER HAS PROVEN SUCH A CHALLENGE!

FOM!

'TWAS YOUR *SIRE*-- AND IN HIS EYES AS IN YOURS, I ALSO SAW MY OWN REFLECTION!

ZAM!

AGAIN THOU SPEAKEST IN RIDDLES!

YET IF MY FATHER DID VANQUISH THEE, MAY THOR DO LESS?

BRAKK!

THIS PLACE SHUDDERS WITH THE FURY OF COMBAT!

LET THE YOUNG THUNDERER PERISH IN HIS PRIDE! MY HUSBAND CANNOT BE DESTROYED--AND OTHERS A'PLENTY SHALL BE MY VICTIMS!

ARGH!

YOU HAVE OFT BOASTED OF POWER, BOY!

LEARN NOW OF TRUE POWER-- AND TREMBLE!

YOU FOUGHT FROM FEAR--FEAR OF SHAME, FEAR OF DEFEAT--AND NOW YOU ARE BROKEN BY ME!

A PITY! FOR A MOMENT, I THOUGHT YOU STRONGER-- BUT YOUR STRENGTH BETRAYED YOU!

NONE IS STRONGER THAN THOR! THINE ATTACK DID BUT STUN ME!

THOOM!

NO SLY WORDS, DARK ONE? DOST THOU FEEL THE POWER THAT THOU HAST MOCKED?

YOU HAVE FORCE OF ARM, I GRANT YOU--BUT YOU ARE YET SHY OF INNER STRENGTH!

LIAR! THOR HATH NO LACK OF POWER!

THOR IS POWER!

FOOL!

THE FORCES WE UNLEASH CANNOT BE CONTAINED!

BARARARR!

ooRooom!

FOR WHAT SEEMS LIKE AN ETERNITY, NO SOUND COMES FROM THE RUINED FORTRESS...

IN THE SMOLDERING RUBBLE, NOTHING STIRS...

THEN...

OHHH, I HURT! BUT, THANK ODIN, I LIVE!

WHAT OF THE DARK ONE?

WHAT OF HIM, GODLING? WHAT OF HIM?

NAY...

AYE! THOUGH THE STARS THEMSELVES SHOULD DIE, I AM!

DEATH CALLS YOU BY YOUR NAME, YOUNG THUNDERER--AND ALL YOUR STRUGGLES SIMPLY SEAL YOUR FATE!

NO... 'TIS *NOT* MY END... IT MUST NOT BE...

TO DIE IN BATTLE... AMONG COMRADES--ONLY THAT DOTH SUIT ME. MAIDENS WOULD SING SONGS OF IT... TO BE PASSED DOWN THE GENERATIONS...

BUT TO DIE LIKE THIS, WITHOUT WITNESS TO TELL THE TALE... *IT MUST NOT BE...*

WARRIOR'S PRIDE! AND WHAT IS PRIDE BUT FEAR MISNAMED?

YOU SURPRISE ME, YOUNG ONE...

HAVE YOU NOT YET GUESSED WHAT I AM?

AYE...

...THOU ART DEATH INCAR-NATE!

HA! YOUR DEATH, PERHAPS... BUT NO, I AM NOT DEATH!

YOUR SIRE KNEW, BUT *YOU* DO NOT--

--AND THAT WILL COST YOU ALL!

THY RIDDLES SHALL NOT SLAY ME...

LET ME BUT REACH THE HAMMER MJOLNIR... AND THOU SHALT SEE HOW HARD THOR DIES.

TOO LATE! ALL WEAPONS ARE BEYOND YOU--

--SAVE MINE!

THOUGH MY TONGUE YEARNS TO CRY FOR MERCY... I SHALL NOT BEG...

I WISH ONLY THAT MY FATHER MIGHT KNOW HIS SON DIED... NOT A COWARD, BUT A TRUE SON OF ODIN...

WHAT?! EVEN AS I STRIKE, HIS SOUL SPEAKS OF LOVE!

NO PRIDE, NO FEAR --LOVE!

LOVE, ONLY!

IS THIS DEATH, THEN?

NO, YOUNG THUNDERER...

LONG HAD YOU BOASTED OF YOUR GODLY STRENGTH, BULLYING OTHERS WITH YOUR BLUSTER--YET YOUR HEART WAS FILLED WITH BOYISH TERRORS! THIS I TURNED AGAINST YOU!

BUT IN THAT DARKEST MOMENT, TERROR MELTED AND YOUR TRUE NOBILITY SHONE THROUGH--AND BROKE MY POWER OVER YOU! ALL IS RESTORED!

THY RIDDLES! EXPLAIN THEM!

SEEK NOT TO COMMAND ME! I HAVE NO MORE TIME FOR YOU!

HOME WITH YOU, BOY! TAKE MY HORSE AS A GIFT TO YOUR FATHER. PERHAPS HE WILL ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS!

WE SHALL MEET AGAIN SOMEDAY!

I'M--IN *ASGARD*? HOW--?!

ALL LANDS ARE IN THE DARK MAN'S DOMAIN!

I MUST HIE UNTO THE ROYAL CHAMBERS!

HARK! WHAT IS THIS?

WOEFUL TIDINGS, FATHER! THY SON, THOR, LIES DEAD IN UNCHARTED LANDS! INTO THOSE REALMS WHERE THOU BADE NO ONE GO HE FORCED US--AND PAID THE PRICE FOR HIS FOOLHARDINESS!

THOU ART IN ERROR, LOKI!

THOR!

TODAY I HAVE FOUGHT WITH LIFE AND DEATH, TO EMERGE IN GLORIOUS VICTORY! HERE IS A PRIZE FOR THEE, FATHER!

THOU CONTESTED NOT AGAINST DEATH, MY SON--

--BUT AGAINST *FEAR*, AND HIS BRIDE, *DESIRE*! I, TOO, MET THEM, AS ALL BEINGS DO!

THEY ARE THE GREAT DESTROYERS OF WARRIORS, AND EVERY WARRIOR'S COMPANIONS! REMEMBER THAT THOU SHALT FACE THEM NOT ONCE, BUT MANY TIMES--AND LET NOT THIS "VICTORY" MAKE THEE OVERCONFIDENT!

TO THE DARK ONE WITH HIS GIFTS! I WANT THEM NOT!

MOMENTS LATER...

THOR! WHEN WE HEARD THOU DIDST RETURN, WE CAME STRAIGHTAWAY! WE HAD GIVEN THEE UP FOR LOST!

LIES! NOBLE VOLSTAGG WAS EVER FAITHFUL!

THOU WERT EVER FEEDING, ROTUND ONE!

DOST THOU BEAR TALES OF FEARFUL ADVENTURES, THOR?

TALES AND ADVENTURES, AYE--BUT WHO WOULD BELIEVE THAT GREAT THOR COULD KNOW FEAR?

HA-HA! WE WOULD NOT, DEAR FRIEND!

SOMEDAY, BROTHER, THOU SHALT FEAR ME!

SOMEDAY...

FIN.

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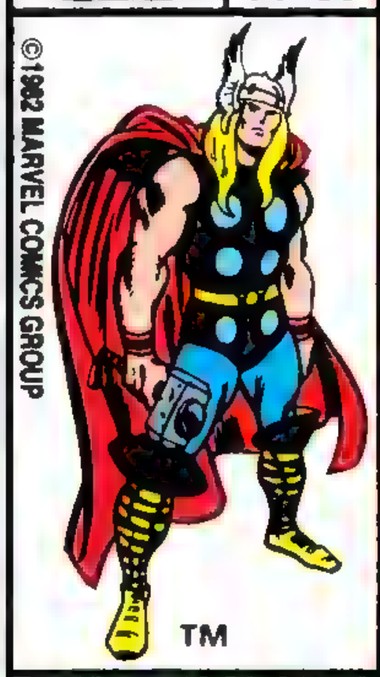

THE MIGHTY

THOR™

A MINUTE'S UP, THUNDER GOD!

YOUR HAMMER HAS BECOME A **STICK!**

YOU HAVE BECOME A **MORTAL!**

YOU HAVE FIVE HUNDRED FEET TO FALL!

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR— and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning— and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard....

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

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GRAVITON

THERE IS ONLY ONE GYMNASIUM ON EARTH WHERE AN ASGARDIAN THUNDER GOD CAN GET A DECENT WORK-OUT... AND IT'S LOCATED IN AVENGERS MANSION...

I KNOW NOT WHY, WASP, BUT AFTER OUR AVENGERS MEETINGS, THIS ALWAYS RELAXES ME.

HMPH! GIVE ME A SHOPPING SPREE AT SAKS ANY DAY-- THIS IS TOO MUCH LIKE WORK! STILL, I HATE TO SEE YOU HERE ALONE.

TWENTY POUNDS MAKE THEE HEAVE SO? MAYHAP THOU ART OUT OF SHAPE...

OH YEAH, GOLDEN BOY? I'D LIKE TO SEE DON BLAKE PRESS THAT THOUSAND-POUND WEIGHT!

WITH A RAP OF HIS ENCHANTED HAMMER, THE MIGHTY THOR BECOMES DR. DONALD BLAKE...

DONE!

YOU SEE? UHN! NOTHING TO IT!

TO THINK THAT UP UNTIL A FEW WEEKS AGO* I NEVER EVEN SUSPECTED THAT THOR WAS ALSO THE AVENGERS' PHYSICIAN! WHO COULD BLAME ME? IT'S NOT JUST A MATTER OF A COSTUME CHANGE-- HE BECOMES A DIFFERENT PERSON.

WHILE THOR IS SO HANDSOME, SO REGAL... I COULD NEVER QUITE RELATE TO HIM...

...BUT NOW THAT I KNOW HIS HUMAN SIDE, I APPRECIATE HIM SO MUCH MORE.

*AVENGERS #220.

SAY, HOW COME YOU'RE STILL SINGLE, DON? I MEAN, DON'T ALL THE NURSES STAND IN LINE FOR A DATE WITH DR. BLAKE--?

OOPS-- ME AND MY BIG MOUTH. SORRY, DON...

GUESS I'M HAVING TROUBLE READJUSTING TO THE SINGLES SCENE... DON'T KNOW WHAT MEN WANT IN A WOMAN OR EVEN WHAT I WANT IN A MAN...

DO YOU HAVE TO BE GOING BACK TO CHICAGO... OR CAN WE TALK A WHILE, DON?

OF COURSE, JANET-- BUT ONLY IF WE CAN RUSTLE UP SOME HOT COCOA FIRST.

MEANWHILE, SOME TWENTY BLOCKS DOWNTOWN, ON A SIDESTREET NEAR THE UNITED NATIONS BUILDING...

...REALITY ABRUPTLY SEEMS TO GO BERSERK.

ARNOLD! IT-IT'S AN EARTH-QUAKE!

STONE BREAKS AND STEEL BUCKLES AS MATTER MAKES A MAD RUSH AT THE GAPING VORTEX IN THE AIR!

NEARBY OBJECTS SHOOT UP INTO THE NIGHT SKY WEIGHTLESSLY...

...THERE TO WILDLY ORBIT A BRILLIANT POINT OF LIGHT.

--AND A STRANGE BEING IS BORN INTO THE CHAOS OF HIS OWN ADVENT.

UNNHH... WHERE--? CAN IT BE? YES! AFTER A SEEMING ETERNITY OF TRYING TO FREE MYSELF--I'VE DONE IT!

RUN, HERMIONE-- RUN!

THE WHITE HOLE GROWS IN SIZE, SPINNING THE LOOSE MATTER AROUND IT IN A FRENZIED DANCE. THEN, SUDDENLY, IT EXPLODES--

I'VE RETURNED TO EARTH!

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH--TRAPPED IN THAT BIZARRE EXTRA-GRAVITIC-DIMENSION--

--MY BODY FUSED WITH THE RUBBLE OF AN ENTIRE ISLAND!

A NIGHTMARE-- BUT I SURVIVED IT-- I'M BACK...

...AND I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I MUST DO.

FIVE CUPS OF COCOA LATER...

AND THOUGH I KNOW DON BLAKE IS A FALSE PERSONA CREATED BY ODIN, WHEN I'M HIM, HE SEEMS JUST AS REAL AS THOR!

IT'S TAKEN ME A WHILE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH MY COMPULSION TO LIVE AS A MORTAL.

GEE, AND I THOUGHT I HAD PROBLEMS!

OH, DON--LOOK AT THE *TIME*. WE'VE BEEN TALKING ALL NIGHT.

NONSENSE, JANET--WHAT'S A FELLOW AVENGER FOR?

MEANWHILE, A NEWLY--AND STRIKINGLY--GARBED FIGURE DEFIES GRAVITY WITH LESS EFFORT THAN A SNOWFLAKE.

LEVITATING STRAIGHT UP THE FACADE OF A LARGE MIDTOWN APARTMENT BUILDING, HE HALTS AT A WINDOW ON THE 18TH FLOOR...

YES, THIS IS IT--THIS IS WHAT I MUST DO.

...AND BLOWS AWAY BOTH WINDOW AND WALL WITH A SINGLE GRAVITIC SHOCKWAVE.

WHAT--?! YOU!!

YES, JUDY PARKS, ME--*GRAVITON*, LORD OF THE ELEMENTAL FORCE!

BUT... BUT WE HEARD YOU WERE *DEAD*!

YES--AND I BET YOU'D *LIKE* THAT, JOE--WOULDN'T YOU?

EVER SINCE YOU WORKED FOR ME AT THE RESEARCH LAB, YOU'VE BEEN *JEALOUS* OF ME, OF MY AUTHORITY--MY *POWER*!

NO! YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG! I FELT *SORRY* FOR YOU WHEN THAT EXPLOSION TURNED YOU IN-TO GRAVITON!

IT DID MORE THAN GIVE YOU CONTROL OVER GRAVITY-- IT DERANGED YOU--MADE YOU ACT LIKE A MONSTER. YOU EVEN DARED TO FIGHT THE AVENGERS.*

BUT THEN, YOUR GRAVITY POWERS WENT OUT OF CONTROL--AND ALL THE MATTER OF YOUR FLOATING CITADEL SMASHED INTO YOU, **FUSING YOUR** BODY, MAKING YOU A GIANT GRAVITY-CREATURE. *

* AVENGERS #158-159.

* TWO-IN-ONE ANNUAL #4.

YES--AND WHEN I FINALLY IMPLODED, YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE RID OF ME FOR GOOD, DIDN'T YOU? WELL, YOU WERE WRONG!

I SIMPLY WARPED INTO ANOTHER DIMENSION!

BUT WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM US?! WHY WON'T YOU LEAVE US ALONE?

I *LOVE* YOU, JUDY! I HAVE EVER SINCE WE SHARED A LABORATORY-- YOU *KNOW* THAT!

BUT WHY *ME*? I'M NOT ESPECIALLY PRETTY--AND I JUST DON'T LOVE YOU! BESIDES, I'M MARRIED TO ANOTHER MAN--AND I'M SOON TO HAVE HIS CHILD!

WITH YOUR POWERS, YOU COULD ATTRACT *HUNDREDS* OF OTHER WOMEN!

HUNDREDS OF *OTHER* WOMEN, JUDY, BUT NOT *YOU*... IS THAT IT?

ANY MAN I COULD LOVE WOULD HAVE TO BE KIND, GENTLE, HONORABLE-- THINGS YOU SIMPLY ARE *NOT*.

AND YOU THINK I *COULDN'T* BE ALL THOSE THINGS, JUDY?

WELL, YOU'RE WRONG! IF I WANTED TO, I *COULD* BE ALL THOSE THINGS-- AND *MORE*!

BUT I DON'T WANT TO! I AM MEANT FOR BETTER THINGS. I SEE NOW THAT I HAVE WASTED MY TIME!

CARING FOR YOU HAS BEEN A MISTAKE!

FOR THE REST OF YOUR DAYS, REMEMBER THIS, JUDY--I COULD HAVE MADE YOU A *QUEEN*!

OH, JOE, WON'T I EVER BE FREE OF THAT MAN AND HIS UNWANTED ATTENTIONS?

THANKS TO YOUR COURAGEOUS SPEECH, I DON'T THINK HE'LL BE BACK.

EVERYTHING'S FINE NOW-- HE'S GONE.

RELAX WHILE I CALL THE POLICE.

IT WASN'T COURAGE, JOE-- IT WAS FEAR... FEAR FOR THE BABY... FOR OUR LIFE TOGETHER...

NEARBY...

NOW WHAT DO I DO?

SHE WAS THE ONLY WOMAN I'VE EVER DESIRED. BUT NOW THAT SHE'S WITH CHILD, SHE CAN NEVER BE MINE. SOME HOMECOMING...

I DON'T EVEN HAVE A PLACE TO STAY...

BAR & GRILL

SO HE SETTLES ON A BAR.

AND SO...

I TELL YOU, A WOMAN SURE KNOWS HOW TO MESS UP A MAN'S LIFE.

I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN, PAL, BUT LIKE MY FRIEND NORTON ALWAYS SAYS...

...WHERE WOULD WE BE WITHOUT 'EM?

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT.

I MUST FIND A CONSORT WORTHY OF MY STATION. NO, A MAN LIKE ME DESERVES MANY CONSORTS--GLAMOROUS, BEAUTIFUL WOMEN!

TELL ME... WHERE DO YOU SUPPOSE ONE MIGHT FIND BEAUTIFUL WOMEN HERE IN TOWN?

THAT'S EASY, PAL-- YA JUST GOTTA HANG OUT WHERE THEY BUY ALL THEM FANCY CLOTHES--

--BLOOMINGDALE'S, SAK'S FIFTH AVENUE, BERGDORF'S -- LIKE THAT.

JUDY IS RIGHT--A MAN WITH MY GIFTS COULD ATTRACT ANY WOMAN HE WANTS...

GOOD IDEA.

BLOOMINGDALE'S, EH? YES... A *VERY* GOOD IDEA.

THE SUN FINDS AVENGERS MANSION...

FEELING BETTER NOW, JAN?

AFTER AN ALL-NIGHTER LIKE THAT, DON I *OUGHT* TO BE-- AND IF YOU CHARGED BY THE HOUR LIKE A SHRINK, I'D HAVE TO FORGET SPREES AT BLOOMINGDALE'S FOR A MONTH.

OFF TO CHICAGO NOW?

YES--JUST AS SOON AS I TAP MY TRUSTY WALKING STICK AND BECOME MY... AH... *OTHER SELF.*

THUS, THE LAME PHYSICIAN DISAPPEARS IN A FLASHING ROAR OF THUNDER AND LIGHTNING--

--REPLACED BY *THE MIGHTY THOR*, LORD OF STORMS AND IMMORTAL SCION OF ASGARD!

I'D BETTER HURRY, THOR, OR I'LL BE LATE FOR MY BUSINESS APPOINTMENT-- ESPECIALLY SINCE I'LL HAVE TO STOP ON THE WAY TO BUY EYELID-PROPS.

BUT I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW-- UNDER ALL THAT SCRUMPTIOUS BRAWN OF YOURS, THERE LURKS ANOTHER LIVING DOLL WHOSE ONLY FLAW IS BEING A TAD SKINNY.

THANKS, FOR THE CHAT, FRIEND.

MEANWHILE, NOT SO MANY BLOCKS DISTANT, THE RATHER DISTURBED ENTITY KNOWN AS GRAVITON STALKS HIS HUNTING GROUNDS...

ANK

THERE IT IS--JUST AS THE BARTENDER SAID...

ONE WAY

DONT WALK

BLOOMINGDALE'S

BLOOMINGDALE'S

SHUCKING HIS STOLEN OVERCOAT, THE GRAVITY MASTER MAKES A BEELINE FOR HIS FASHIONABLE TARGET...

LOOKIT THAT GUY-- HE'S *FLYIN'*!

BLOOMINGDALE

YEAH-- AND HE AIN'T EVEN ONE OF THE AVENGERS OR FANTASTIC FOUR!

CIRCLING HIGH ABOVE THE STREET, GRAVITON BEGINS TO PLY HIS GRAVIMETRIC POWERS...

FIRST, HE INCREASES THE GRAVITY BENEATH THE SIDEWALK AND STREET SURROUNDING THE DEPARTMENT STORE. WITH THE SOUND OF AN EARTHQUAKE, THE PAVEMENT COLLAPSES BENEATH THE BUILDING...

THEN, AS THE VERY AIR HUMS AND VIBRATES, THE STORE ITSELF IS WRAPPED IN A COCOON OF NULL-GRAVITY... STRAINING AGAINST THE GRIP OF ITS RUINED FOUNDATIONS...

FINALLY, IT WRENCHES FREE OF BUCKLING CONCRETE, SNAPPING STEEL PYLONS...

...AND THE ENTIRE BLOCK-SIZED EIGHT-FLOOR STRUCTURE--THE ENTIRE MASS OF STONE, STEEL, GLASS, SHOPPERS, AND PRECIOUS MERCHANDISE, ALL WEIGHING UNCOUNTABLE TONS--FLOATS FREE OF THE STREET!

BLOOMINGDALES

BELOW, IT LEAVES A GAPING HOLE IN THE DREAMS OF EVERY CHIC NEW YORKER...

THEN, AS GRAVITON ENTERS HIS AIRBORNE PRIZE...

HELP! I... I'M HAVING A NIGHTMARE! EVERYTHING IS FLOATING AROUND IN MID-AIR--AND... AND MY *STOMACH!*

I KNOW WHAT YA MEAN, DEARIE-- I PRAYED TO LOSE WEIGHT LAST NIGHT, BUT THIS IS *RIDICU-LOUS!*

DEFTLY THREADING HIS WAY THROUGH THE FREE-FALL CHAOS, GRAVITON REACHES THE MAN-AGER'S OFFICE...

OUT OF MY WAY, FOOL! I MUST USE THE STORE'S INTERCOM!

HEAR ME, SHOPPERS! I AM *GRAVITON*--AND I HAVE JUST SKYJACKED THIS STORE FOR THE PURPOSE OF FIND-ING A SUITABLE CONSORT!

BESIDES BEING WEDDED TO A MAN OF AWESOME POWER, THE WOMAN I CHOOSE WILL RECEIVE AS DOWRY--*THIS VERY STORE!*

WHOEVER HE IS, HE MUST BE INSANE!

BEFORE DRAWING ANY CONCLUSIONS, MAYBE WE SHOULD SEE WHAT HE LOOKS LIKE FIRST...

SHE MAY HAVE A POINT, GIRLS-- OWNING BLOOMIE'S IS TEMPTATION ENOUGH, BUT IF THE GUY'S A HUNK ON TOP OF IT...!

ODIN'S BLOOD! WHAT MANNER OF MADNESS--?

SCARCELY HAVE I E'EN DEPARTED THE GROUNDS OF AVENGERS MANSION--THAN I BE CONFRONTED WITH *THIS!*

'TWOULD SEEM DONALD BLAKE'S CHICAGO PATIENTS MUST NEEDS AWAIT HIS MINISTRA-TIONS A TRIFLE LONGER...

AND SO, GUIDED BY THE POWER OF HIS ENCHANTED URU HAMMER MJOLNIR, THOR STREAKS INTO THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE LEVI-TATING BUILDING -- ONLY TO DISCOVER...

BY ALL THE GODS OF ASGARD-- 'TIS MADNESS INDEED!

EVERYTHING IN THE STORE IS WEIGHTLESS!

-- INCLUDING E'EN MINE OWN BODY!

HOOKING A PILLAR TO HALT HIMSELF, LEST THE UNIMPEDED FORCE OF HIS FLIGHT HURTLE HIM STRAIGHT THROUGH THE OPPOSITE WALL, THE THUNDER GOD PAUSES TO APPRAISE THE SITUATION...

ONE THING IS CLEAR-- I MUST FIND SOMEONE WHO WAS HERE AT THE BEGINNING...

STRUGGLE NOT, WOMAN-- 'TWILL DO THEE NO GOOD IN THIS ABSENCE OF GRAVITY! NOW TELL ME-- WHAT TRANSPIRES HERE?

THOR! THANK HEAVEN IT'S YOU! SOME NUT CALLING HIM-SELF "GRAVITON" IS ON THE TOP FLOOR HOLDING A BEAUTY PAGEANT OR SOMETHING...

...SAYS HE'S GOING TO CLAIM THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IN THE STORE!

AYE-- I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED IT WOULD BE GRAVITON...!

THERE BE FEW OTHERS WITH THE POWER TO SO CONFUSE NATURAL ORDER!

AND EVER SINCE I FIRST FACED THE VIL-LAIN-- IN THE COMPANY OF MY FELLOW AVEN-GERS-- I HAVE FEARED HIS RETURN...

BUT NOW THAT THE MOMENT HAS COME TO PASS, IT SHALL NOT FIND THOR WANTING!

YOU FOUR ARE THE FAIREST I'VE YET SEEN. NOW I'D LIKE EACH OF YOU TO--

HOLD, VILLAIN!

THOR--! AH, YES--I'D EXPECTED ONE OF NEW YORK'S SELF-APPOINTED GUARDIANS TO SHOW UP SOONER OR LATER...

THEN THOU HAST ALSO EXPECTED AN END TO THY SCHEME!

BUT GRAVITON MERELY GESTURES-- AND MJOLNIR IS SNARED IN A GRAVITATIONAL FIELD...

DON'T BE A FOOL, THOR! IF YOUR HAMMER HAD KNOCKED ME OUT--

-- THIS WHOLE BUILDING WOULD HAVE PLUNGED TO THE GROUND, KILLING EVERY CLERK AND SHOPPER WITHIN ITS SHATTERING WALLS!

HE IS RIGHT--I MUST BE MORE CAREFUL ABOUT HOW I--

IT DOES NOT MATTER HOWEVER--

--IF *YOU* ARE KNOCKED OUT!

FOR EXAMPLE, FIRST I SHALL SET UP A HEAVY GRAVITY FIELD *BEHIND* YOU...

WHAM

UNNH! MY LIMBS-- PINNED!

...AND NOW I SHALL IMBUE THAT PILLAR WITH A *SIMILAR* FIELD OF ATTRACTION, BOUNCING YOU ABOUT LIKE A RAGDOLL!

KRUNCHH

MY HAMMER--EACH MOMENT I AM SEPARATED FROM MJOLNIR BRINGS ME CLOSER TO MY VULNERABLE FORM OF DONALD BLAKE!

...BUT I SHALL RESERVE THE STRONGEST AND MOST CONCENTRATED GRAVITY FIELD--

-- FOR THE *OUTER WALL!*

I'M OUTSIDE WITHOUT MINE URU HAMMER...!

KRA-DOOM

-- AND, WITHOUT IT, I CAN REMAIN AS THOR FOR BUT SIXTY SECONDS!

THEN I FALL WITH ONLY A HANDFUL OF SECONDS LEFT--SURELY TO TRANSFORM TO THE MORTAL DONALD BLAKE LONG ERE I REACH THE GROUND!

COME TO ME, MJOLNIR! FLY TO MY HAND!

BUT, STILL SNARED IN THE GRAVITY NET, THE HAMMER CANNOT RESPOND...

... UNTIL GRAVITON RELEASES THE SNARE, WITH A MIND TO INSPECT HIS NEW PRIZE...

NOW, LET'S SEE WHAT THIS TOY CAN--

WHAT?! IT'S FLYING AWAY FROM ME--OUT THE HOLE IN THE WALL!

COME TO ME, MJOLNIR!

FASTER!

COME TO MY HAND BEFORE--

THE TIME EXPIRES.

NO! THE HAMMER'S TURNED INTO MY WALKING STICK!

BUT MAYBE THERE'S STILL A CHANCE-- IF I CAN REACH IT...

... IF I CAN JUST PLUCK IT OUT OF THE AIR...

YES!

NOW--I'VE GOT TO STRIKE IT AGAIN...AND BE-COME THOR BEFORE I REACH THE GROUND!

MAYBE THE SIDE OF ONE OF THOSE BUILDINGS--IF I CAN TWIST MYSELF CLOSE ENOUGH...

...RIDE THE AIR CURRENTS LIKE A SKYDIVER!

NO! IT'S NO USE--!

I CAN'T GET CLOSE ENOUGH! I'M GOING TO FALL ALL THE WAY--!

RIGHT INTO THE CRUMBLED STEEL AND CONCRETE-LINED CAVITY WHICH WAS ONCE BLOOMINGDALE'S FOUNDATION!

LOOK OUT! THAT GUY FELL OUTTA THE BUILDING! HE'S GONNA SPLATTER ALL OVER THE--

POLICE LINE

IMPACT--AND THE HORRIFIED VOICE CHOKES INTO A SOB.

BUT THEN...

POLICE LINE

POLICE

WHAT THE--?! IT'S *THOR*--CLIMBIN' OUTTA THE HOLE!

BUT *HE* AIN'T THE GUY WHO FELL *INTO* THE HOLE!

PRAISE ODIN THAT BLAKE WAS QUICK ENOUGH OF WIT TO PLACE HIS CANE UNDER HIM AT THE VERY LAST MOMENT--TRANSFORMING TO THOR EVEN AT THE MOMENT OF IMPACT.

AND NOW, I MUST *AGAIN* BECOME BLAKE...

FOR PERHAPS MY HUMAN SELF POSSESSES THE KNOWLEDGE TO DEFEAT THAT MADMAN!

Rx

AND SO, AFTER MAKING A CERTAIN MYSTERIOUS SIDE-TRIP--

-- BLAKE IS AGAIN READY TO BE-COME THOR...

... AND THOR IS AGAIN READY TO DO BATTLE WITH GRAVITON!

YES, MY DEAR, I THINK I SHALL CHOOSE YOU TO BECOME MY--

EH--? YOU AGAIN! HAVE YOU BROUGHT YOUR AVENGERS PLAYMATES THIS TIME, LONGHAIR? FIGHTING JUST ONE OF YOU WAS TOO EASY!

NAY, I AM STILL ALONE, MADMAN--AND THIS TIME I WOULD MERELY TALK WITH THEE, AND ASK WHAT THOU WOULDST HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH HERE.

I'M CHOOSING A MATE-- PERHAPS SEVERAL, IN FACT. AND BELIEVE ME--I'M NOT COERCING THEM--THEY RATHER LIKE MEN OF POWER!

DON'T BELIEVE HIM, THOR--WE DON'T *ALL* GO ALONG WITH THIS!

THAT MAY WELL BE, MY LOVELY, BUT IN TIME YOU *SHALL* COME TO BE MINE--JUST AS THIS ENTIRE STORE IS NOW MINE!

THEN THOU ART TRULY BEYOND REASON--AND I AM DUTY-BOUND TO BATTLE THEE!

HAH! THE OLDEST TRICK IN THE BOOK--FLINGING YOUR HAMMER AWAY FROM ME, HOPING I WON'T NOTICE...

...AS IT CIRCLES AROUND TO STRIKE ME FROM BEHIND!

BUT AS GRAVITON TURNS HIS ATTENTION TO THE HAMMER, THOR LAUNCHES HIMSELF FROM AN ANCHORING PILLAR...

'TWAS NOT AN ATTACK FROM THE REAR, VILLAIN--'TWAS INSTEAD BUT A NECESSARY DISTRACTION--FOR MINE *OWN* ATTACK FROM THE REAR!

NO! YOU TRICKED ME!

AYE...

OWTCH! WHAT DID YOU--?

...AND NOW I HAVE INJECTED THEE WITH A QUANTITY OF ***SODIUM PENTATHOL!*** IN SOME TWO MINUTES THOU WILT BE UNCONSCIOUS, AND IF THIS BUILDING--WHICH I HAVE EVACUATED SAVE FOR US--IS STILL IN THE AIR AT THAT TIME, IT WILL FALL...

...KILLING THEE AND THY WOMEN.

YOU... YOU'RE BLUFFING, THOR... BUT I... GETTING DIZZY... NO... CAN'T GIVE IN TO YOU... BUT I... I'M GOING TO PASS OUT...

PLEASE, GRAVITON--SET THE BUILDING DOWN! DON'T LET US DIE!

THE SHOWDOWN OF WILLS ENSUES FOR LONG, TENSE MOMENTS... AND THEN--

THE BUILDING! IT'S COMING DOWN--SLOWLY!

BLOOMINGDALE'S

THERE IS A SLIGHT QUAKE AS THE STORE RESETTLES UNEASILY ON ITS FOUNDATIONS...

...AND INSIDE--MANY BRUISES AND MUCH SHATTERED MERCHANDISE, AS THE NORMAL LAWS OF GRAVITY AGAIN HOLD SWAY.

CURSE YOU, THOR! I... I'D HAVE BEATEN YOU IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR YOUR TRICKERY!

AYE--AND IF IT HAD NOT BEEN FOR THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THOR AND DONALD BLAKE.

THEN, AS GRAVITON FINALLY SLUMPS UNCONSCIOUS...

IF ANY OF THEE WERE--

HEY, MISTER GOLDILOCKS--WHAT IF HE HADN'T COME TO HIS SENSES AND SET THIS BUILDING DOWN GENTLY, RATHER THAN LETTING IT FALL OUT OF SPITE?

WEREN'T YOU TAKING A MIGHTY BIG GAMBLE WITH OUR LIVES?

AYE...

THAT IS WHY I BROUGHT A *SECOND* INJECTION--OF *STIMULANT*--TO COUNTERACT THE OTHER DRUG'S EFFECTS HAD GRAVITON DEEMED THE SACRIFICE WORTHWHILE.

HOLDING THIS AS A LAST RESORT, I WAS EVEN ABLE TO MISLEAD HIM ABOUT HAVING EVACUATED THE REST OF THE STORE.

AND WITH THAT, THOR TAKES HIS LEAVE OF THE DISTAFF SHOPPERS...

ON THE ROOF, WHIRLING MJOLNIR IN COMPLEX ARABESQUES OF ENCHANTMENT--

--THE THUNDER GOD QUICKLY CREATES A DIMENSIONAL VORTEX--

--THROUGH WHICH HE AND HIS VILLAINOUS CHARGE ARE TRANSPORTED INTO THE VOID OF INTERSTELLAR SPACE...

WITH THEE HERE, GRAVITON, THOU SHALT HAVE NO MATTER TO EXERT THY POWER UPON!

AS LONG AS THY GRAVITATIONAL POWERS ARE USELESS, MIDGARD WILT BE SAFE FROM THY DEPREDATIONS.

ANOTHER HAMMER-WROUGHT VORTEX--

--AND THOR REAPPEARS ON THE ROOF OF BLOOMINGDALE'S...

YON SHOPPERS WILL HAVE MUCH TO SPEAK OF IN THE WEEKS TO COME, BUT SINCE THEY ARE SAFE AND SOUND...

'TIS TIME TO RETURN AT LAST TO CHICAGO...

AND THE NEXT TIME THE WASP SHOULD ASK, I WILL KNOW FOR CERTAIN...

HEFTING A THOUSAND POUNDS IS PREFERABLE, BY FAR, TO A SHOPPING SPREE AT BLOOMINGDALE'S.

AND THE THUNDER GOD SMILES, ARCING WEST.

NEXT ISSUE: DARKOTH THE DEATH-DEMON!

TALES OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS™

DOUG MOENCH	ALAN KUPPERBERG	JIM MOONEY	JANICE CHIANG	GEORGE ROUSSOS	MARK GRUENWALD	JIM SHOOTER
Scripter	Penciler	Inker	Letterer	Colorist	Editor	Editor-in-Chief

A GATHERING OF EVIL

BEYOND KNOWN SPACE EXISTS SHINING ASGARD, THE REALM ETERNAL...

...AND WHERE ALL-FATHER ODIN, RULER OF ALL THAT IS MIGHTY AND MAJESTIC, SEEKS NOW A FINAL SOLACE OF THE SOUL...

QUEEN JOLENA, I... I...

SAY IT NOT, BELOVED ODIN--I KNOW WHY THOU HAST COME TO MY DOOR...

...AND WOULD THAT OUR LOVE--A LOVE WHICH COULD WELL SHAKE THE STARS FROM THEIR DESTINY--WERE NOT SO TRAGICALLY DOOMED.

AYE, MY BEAUTIFUL JOLENA...

...BUT DOOMED OUR LOVE IS--AND DOOMED IT MUST FOREVER REMAIN!

I AM WED TO *FRIGGA* NOW... AND NO MATTER HOW STRONG WAS THE LOVE WHICH BOUND US IN THE PAST--*

--WE MUST BOTH FIND THE GREATER STRENGTH TO BREAK IT!

...WHERE BRAVE **HEIMDALL**, GUARDIAN OF THE RAINBOW BRIDGE **BIFROST**, STANDS EVER VIGILANT ON THE CAUSEWAY TO THE GODS...

*AS REVEALED IN THOR #322.

IN TRUTH, I STILL LOVE THEE, JOLENA, BUT FOR THE GOOD OF ASGARD--AND FOR THE GOOD OF FRIGGA'S HONOR--THESE MUST BE THE LAST MOMENTS SHARED BETWEEN US...

I HAVE KNOWN ALL ALONG--WITH A KNOWLEDGE BEYOND FEAR--THAT THIS WOULD BE OUR LAST MEETING.

BUT LET ME SPEND THESE LAST MOMENTS, AT LEAST, IN THE WARMTH OF THY ARMS...

...THAT WE MAY REMEMBER AND FOREVER CHERISH THE GOLDEN LOVE THAT WAS ONCE OURS.

NOT A SINGLE MURMURED WORD IS HEARD THROUGH THE THICK PANE OF JOLENA'S WINDOW, YET THIS FINAL EMBRACE IS GREEDILY SPIED BY DEVILISH LOKI...

AND SO, I NOW HAVE EVIDENCE OF MY FATHER ODIN'S INFIDELITY--

--AND THUS THE MEANS, AT LAST, TO PAY HIM BACK FOR THE PUNISHMENT I'VE SUFFERED AT HIS HANDS.

SOON THE VAST AVENUE OF DESTINY IS STAINED WITH LOKI'S SHADOW--AND THE AIR ABOVE IT RINGS WITH HIS SNEERING, OUTRAGED VOICE.

HE WAS--EMBRACING JOLENA, I TELL YOU, EVEN AS HIS FAITHFUL WIFE FRIGGA DUTIFULLY AWAITS HIM AT THE PALACE!

AND LONG BEFORE THE DAY IS OUT, ALL OF ASGARD IS ABUZZ WITH THE DARK RUMOR OF ODIN'S FAITHLESS DEED.

AS DUSKS FALLS OVER THE GLEAMING SPIRES OF THE FABLED REALM, IT MIRRORS THE MELANCHOLY MOOD OF THE ALL-FATHER'S SOUL...

WITH A HEAVY HEART, BUT A SENSE THAT HIS CONSCIENCE HAS BEEN CLEANSED, HE RETURNS TO THE PALACE...

...TO FIND HIS WIFE AND QUEEN AWAITING HIM.

ODIN... MY HUSBAND... NE'ER BEFORE HAVE MY THOUGHTS CONSORTED WITH RUMOR... BUT THIS TIME, MY MIND HATH BEEN OVER-COME BY MY HEART...

PLEASE... TELL ME BUT ONE THING... IS IT TRUE?

AND FRIGGA'S COUNTENANCE, RATHER THAN ACCUSING, IS MARRED BY A TREMBLING GHOST OF FEAR.

AYE, MY WIFE, 'TIS TRUE... BUT 'TIS NOT WHAT THY HEART FEARS.

VISIT JOLENA I DID, BUT FOR THE FINAL TIME...

...TO BID FAREWELL TO A LOVE WHICH CAN NO LONGER BE...

THOU ART NOW MINE ONLY TRUE LOVE, FRIGGA--NOW AND FOREVER.

AND RELIEF IS A FLOOD WELLING FROM HER HEART...

...EVEN AS LOKI CONSPIRES WITH **TYR**, OF THE SINGLE HAND, ASGARD'S GRIM GOD OF WAR.

AYE, LOKI, ODIN HATH OFT SHAMED ME, PRAISING HATED THOR'S EXPLOITS--

-- WHEN HE WELL KNOWS THAT *I* AM ASGARD'S PRIME WARRIOR.

THEN YOU WILL JOIN ME, TYR, IN THE WORKING OF MISCHIEF?

MISCHIEF--? NAY, LOKI...

... BUT JOIN THEE I SHALL, IN THE VERY TOPPLING OF ODIN FROM HIS THRONE! AYE-- ASGARD HAS LONG NEEDED NEW AND FIRMER LEADER-SHIP!

YOU... YOU WOULD DARE EVEN *SUGGEST* SUCH A THING--?!

BESIDES, EVEN IF WE DARED, HOW COULD WE... HOW *MIGHT* WE SUCCESFULLY OPPOSE HIS VAST POWER?

THE FOREMOST GODS WILL REMAIN LOYAL TO HIM, YES, BUT SENTIMENT AMONG THE COMMON GODS ALREADY RUNS COUNTER TO HIM...

THEY WILL HARDLY RALLY 'ROUND HIM NOW THAT HE HATH SHAMED HIS WIFE!

AND IF WE COULD GATHER ALL OF ODIN'S ENEMIES, PAST AND PRESENT--THE STORM GIANTS, FIRE-DEMONS, HELA, KARNILLA, EVEN THE SERPENT OF MIDGARD !

A FIERY GLEAM OF FASCINATION LIGHTS LOKI'S EYES, MOMENTARILY CONQUERING HIS DOUBTS--BUT THEN...

NO. EVEN WITH SUCH AN ARMY MASSED ON OUR SIDE... ODIN AND HIS FAVORED GODS ARE SIMPLY TOO POWERFUL.

MY CURSED HALF-BROTHER THOR ALONE--

BAH! THERE *IS* A WAY!

WHAT?

THE GOLDEN APPLES OF THE GODDESS *IDUN!* WITHOUT THEM, EVERY GOD WOULD LOSE HIS IMMORTALITY--AND BEGIN AGING TOWARD DEATH!

AYE... IT WOULD WORK!

IT WOULD TRULY *WORK*, TYR!

THEN THOU AND I ARE IN BUSINESS, LOKI?

AYE, WAR GOD--THE BUSINESS OF KINGS!

AND THE HALL ECHOES, LONG AND LOUDLY, WITH THE SOUND OF MAD LAUGHTER.

IT BEGINS WITH THE FEAR-SOME STORM GIANTS...

AYE, LITTLE GODS, WE HAVE LOATHED ODIN SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME!

WE SHALL JOIN YOUR RANKS--AND IF WE WIN, WE MAY EVEN SPARE YOUR LIVES.

HELA IS NEXT, IN HER DARK DOMAIN OF NIFLEHEIM...

ODIN AND I HAVE MADE OUR PEACE.* I WILL NOT CONSPIRE AGAINST HIM.

*THOR #314.

BAH! WE DO NOT NEED YOU, DEATH-GODDESS! ASGARD WILL BE OURS--AND THEN YOU WILL WISH YOU HAD THROWN IN WITH US!

HOWEVER, THE ELEMENTAL SONS OF SURTUR READILY AGREE TO BECOME ALLIES...

...AS DOES KARNILLA, QUEEN OF THE NORNS...

AYE, FOR RECENT INSULTS I WOULD REPAY BOTH ODIN AND BALDER...

I SHALL SPEAK TO THE THREE NORNS WHO DWELL IN MY LAND. PERHAPS I CAN EVEN TEMPT FATE!

FINALLY, IN THE HINTERLANDS, WHERE THE WOLFING WARRIORS HAVE RECENTLY SUFFERED DEFEAT AT ODIN'S HANDS...

THEN IF YOU ARE WITH US, FELLOW WARRIORS--

--LET ODIN'S THRONE TREMBLE UNDER OUR MARCH!

NEXT: THE GOLDEN APPLES OF IMMORTALITY!

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THE MIGHTY

THOR™

A DAY IN THE DEATH OF DARKOTH!

HANNIGAN & MILGROM '82

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR— and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning— and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard....

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

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A DEAL WITH DARKOTH

AS EVER, MY LEGIONS SWELL, ALL PLUCKED FROM THE BENIGHTED WORLD ABOVE CALLED EARTH--THE SPAWNING GROUND FOR SOULS BOTH DOOMED AND DAMNED.

SO LONG AS MAN REMAINS A MERE EDUCATED SAVAGE--SO LONG AS THE UNTHINKING MASSES OF HUMANITY REMAIN HOSTILE AND CONSUMED WITH GREED AND HATRED, THEN SO LONG SHALL THEIR SOULS BE *MINE!*

SO IT HAS EVER BEEN AND SO IT SHALL EVER BE--FOR I AM *MEPHISTO, LORD OF THE DARK DOMAIN!*

AND YET, BECAUSE OF THE RECENT INTERFERENCE BY HE WHO IS CALLED *THOR*,* MY PRIDE STILL SUFFERS GRIEVOUS INJURY!

NEITHER ONE OF US COULD BE CONQUERED OR SLAIN-- BUT EVEN THOUGH OUR STRUGGLE WAS THUS FORCED TO END IN DEADLOCK, THOR NEVERTHELESS PREVAILED... EVEN DARED TO STEAL SOULS FROM MY DOMAIN!

WHAT DOES IT MATTER THAT I CHEATED--AND CLAIMED THOSE SOULS FAR BEFORE THEIR TIME? THOR MUST STILL BE BROUGHT TO HIS KNEES-- AND FORCED TO *PAY!*

*SEE THOR #310.

YET IT IS OBVIOUS THAT I CANNOT HOPE TO EXACT *DIRECT* REVENGE ON THE THUNDER GOD--LEST WE MERELY BATTLE TO A STALEMATE, ENDURING FOR ALL ETERNITY, AS THOR SO NOBLY VOWED...

RATHER, I MUST EMPLOY CUNNING AND *INDIRECT* MEANS, STRIKING THOR AT HIS GREATEST POINT OF VULNERABILITY...

...THAT WHICH IS REVEALED TO ME NOW IN MY MYSTIC VAPORS-- HIS WEAK MORTAL FORM OF *DR. DONALD BLAKE.*

THE TEST RESULTS CONFIRM OUR FEARS, MRS. BARCLAY.

IT'S ME, ISN'T IT, DR. BLAKE? MY HUSBAND'S ALREADY BEEN TESTED AND THE PROBLEM ISN'T WITH HIM.

YES, I'M AFRAID YOUR TESTS ARE NEGATIVE.

BUT PLEASE, MRS. BARCLAY, DON'T FEEL THAT THIS MAKES YOU ANY LESS OF A WOMAN. IN EVERY OTHER WAY--

DON'T WORRY, DOCTOR, I'M NOT *THAT* SENSITIVE-- I'D JUST LIKE TO HAVE A CHILD, THAT'S ALL. SO WHAT NOW? FERTILITY DRUGS?

WELL, THEY *COULD* BE TRIED... BUT IN YOUR CASE, MRS. BARCLAY, I'M AFRAID I WOULDN'T HOLD MUCH HOPE FOR THEIR EFFICACY...

THEN *WHAT*, DOCTOR?

WELL, THERE *ARE* OTHER ALTERNATIVES--FOSTER PARENTHOOD, OUTRIGHT ADOPTION, AND EVEN SOME MORE... AH, EXOTIC POSSIBILITIES.

YOU MEAN... LIKE A TEST TUBE BABY?

WELL... YES, I DON'T PERFORM SUCH PROCEDURES MYSELF, BUT I COULD REFER YOU TO--

NO, THAT'S ALL RIGHT, DOCTOR.

MAYBE THIS IS A BLESSING IN DISGUISE--FOR NOW, ANYWAY. WE *DID* WANT A CHILD, ALMOST DESPERATELY, BUT... WELL, THINGS HAVE CHANGED.

I DON'T MEAN TO PRY, MRS. BARCLAY... BUT IS SOMETHING TROUBLING YOU?

NOTHING THAT A MILLION OTHER PEOPLE AREN'T TROUBLED BY THESE DAYS. I LOST MY JOB, THAT'S ALL.

TOM--MY HUSBAND--HE MAKES A GOOD ENOUGH SALARY, BUT THESE DAYS IT'S ALMOST VITAL FOR BOTH THE HUSBAND *AND* WIFE TO WORK. AND IF THE BABY WERE TO COME--

I SEE. TELL ME... WHAT KIND OF WORK DID YOU DO?

I WAS A RECEPTIONIST-CLERK AT A SMALL BUSINESS ON THE SOUTH SIDE. IT WENT BANKRUPT.

A RECEPTIONIST? HMM... WOULD YOU OBJECT TO WORKING HERE IN THE LOOP AREA?

WOULD I *OBJECT* TO--? DOCTOR, YOU WOULD JUST HAVE TO BE *KIDDING!*

WHAT EXACTLY DID YOU HAVE IN MIND?

AT THIS DESK RIGHT OUTSIDE THE DOOR.

YOU MEAN YOU... YOU'RE ASKING ME TO WORK FOR *YOU*--?

RECEPTIO

WELL, AS YOU KNOW, I'VE JUST OPENED MY NEW PRACTICE HERE IN CHICAGO. AND IN ALL THE CONFUSION I'VE BEEN RELYING ON TEMPORARY OFFICE HELP UNTIL I COULD GET AROUND TO--

DOCTOR, YOU HAVE GOT YOURSELF A *WOMAN*. AND, I ASSURE YOU--

--ONCE YOU'VE SEEN MY RESUME, YOU *WON'T* CHANGE YOUR MIND.

FINE. CAN YOU START... LET'S SAY... TOMORROW AT NINE, MRS. BARCLAY?

DOUBLE- FINE. AND THE NAME IS BRENDA.

ENOUGH! EVEN AS THE MORTAL BLAKE, THOR'S NOBILITY IS ENOUGH TO SICKEN ME!

AND YET THERE IS ONE CRUCIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO. WHERE THOR IS IMMORTAL AND INVULNERABLE, BLAKE IS *NOT*...

... AND IS THUS SUSCEPTIBLE TO AN ATTACK BY ANOTHER WHOSE SOUL I CLAIMED BOTH FALSELY AND PREMATURELY...

...TO AN ATTACK BY *DARKOTH THE DEATH-DEMON!*

WHY--?!

I... I DON'T *BELONG* HERE...! *WHY--?*

BECAUSE I CLAIMED YOU WHEN THE OTHER SIDE-- THE POWER OF LIGHT-- *REFUSED* YOU IN YOUR PRESENT FORM.

YOU ARE A *MONSTER*, DEATH-DEMON, AND THE OTHER SIDE SPARES LITTLE LOVE FOR MONSTERS!

NO! YOU LIE! I REMEMBER NOW!

YOU CHEATED! YOU STOLE ME-- BODY AND SOUL-- IN THE MOMENT JUST BEFORE I DIED IN THAT EXPLOSION! YOU'VE SPOILED THE NORMAL COURSE OF EVENTS-- DEPRIVING ME OF MY RIGHTFUL AFTERLIFE!

YES, DEATH-DEMON-- *YES!!*

AND NOW YOU ARE *TRULY* DEAD-- AND TRULY *MINE!* NOW BE SILENT WHILE I PONDER YOUR FATE!

AND DARKOTH STIFFENS IN HIS PRIVATE POOL OF AGONY... YET, EVEN IN HIS TRANCE, HE IS GIVEN NO RESPITE FROM THE PAIN.

FROOOM

NOW TO USE THE MYSTIC VAPORS TO SHOW ME THE WRETCH'S PAST...

... THAT I MAY FIND THE ONE WEAK SPOT WHICH WILL ENABLE ME TO SQUEEZE HIM UNTIL HIS VERY SOUL *BLEEDS*...

SHOW ME!

AS YOU WISH, MASTER!

DARKOTH WAS ONCE AN ORDINARY MAN NAMED DESMOND PITT -- WHOSE BEST FRIEND WAS BENJAMIN GRIMM, HE WHO EVENTUALLY BECAME THE *THING*.

LATER, THE LATVERIAN MONARCH ***DR. DOOM*** ALCHEMICALLY TRANSFORMED PITT INTO THE DEATH-DEMON HE CALLED DARKOTH.

"PITT'S WIFE DIED.

"UNFORTUNATELY, WE WERE UNABLE TO CLAIM HER.

"HIS YOUNG SON WAS PLACED IN AN ORPHANAGE, WHERE HE REMAINS EVEN NOW.

ROOSEVE
ORPHANA

"TORMENTED, OUT OF CONTROL, DARKOTH WAS FORCED BY DR. DOOM TO FIGHT THE ***FANTASTIC FOUR***.

"LATER, A BEING CALLED DIABLO ADDED TO DARKOTH'S POWERS, CONFERRING UPON HIM FLIGHT AND THE ABILITY TO PASS THROUGH SOLID OBJECTS.

"AGAIN HE BATTLED THE THING, AND WAS FINALLY ABLE TO REVEAL TO HIS FORMER FRIEND THAT HE WAS ACTUALLY DESMOND PITT.

HE SAVED THE THING'S LIFE FOR A SECOND TIME AND DIED A HERO IN THE EXPLOSION... BUT NOT BEFORE YOU SO CUNNINGLY SEIZED HIM, MASTER.

ENOUGH! I HAVE WHAT I NEED... THE ONE WEAK SPOT... THE ***SON***.

YOU ARE NOW A DEATH-DEMON IN MORE THAN NAME, DESMOND PITT!

YOU ARE NOW *TRULY* DEAD!

... BUT YOUR PITIFUL SON *LIVES ON*, ABANDONED BY HIS FATHER TO A COLD AND CRUEL ORPHANAGE, WITHOUT FUTURE, WITHOUT HOPE...

... UNLESS ***YOU RETURN TO HIM***.

BUT... H-HOW--? THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! I-- I'M ***DEAD!***

YOUR BODY IS DEAD, BUT YOUR SOUL LIVES ON--AND I AM WILLING TO RELEASE YOUR SOUL...*IF* YOU PROCURE FOR ME A DIFFERENT SOUL IN ITS PLACE.

RENDER UNTO ME THE SOUL OF DR. DONALD BLAKE--AND YOU MAY HAVE BLAKE'S *BODY* IN WHICH TO RESUME A NEW LIFE.

GOOD NIGHT, NURSE STEVENS--SEE YOU IN THE MORNING.

YOU...YOU WANT ME TO *KILL* THIS DR. BLAKE...? *NO!* I COULD *NEVER* DO SUCH A THING!

TRUST ME! THE MAN IS *EVIL!* HE *BELONGS* HERE!

WHY ELSE WOULD I WANT HIM **HERE** IN MY DOMAIN...IF HE WERE NOT A WICKED MESSENGER OF CORRUPTION...A PURVEYOR OF EVIL?

NO! I CAN'T! I WON'T!

THINK OF YOUR SON! YOUR ABANDONED SON!

IN OFFERING YOU BLAKE'S BODY, I OFFER YOU NEW LIFE, DESMOND PITT--SO THAT YOU MAY GIVE YOUR *SON* NEW LIFE!

I... I...

...VERY WELL.

I WILL DO IT...FOR MY SON.

SO BE IT!

WITH THE FORCE OF MY OWN ESSENCE, I HEREBY EMPOWER YOU TO RETURN TO THE LAND OF THE LIVING!

"THOUGH DEAD YOU ARE AND DEAD YOU SHALL FOREVER REMAIN, I GRANT YOU THE POWER TO *TRANSCEND* YOUR DEATH...

"...TO VENTURE FORTH FROM THE DOMAIN OF THE DOOMED AND THE DAMNED, TO PIERCE THE VEIL OF ETERNAL DARKNESS--AND TO *RISE*--HIGHER AND EVER HIGHER--

"--UNTIL YOU SHALL BREACH THE CANYONS OF CONCRETE AND STEEL...

"...CALLED *CHICAGO.*"

AND, IN THE APARTMENT ADJOINING DONALD BLAKE'S MICHIGAN AVENUE OFFICES...

A FULL DAY--THE KIND OF DAY THAT MAKES SLEEP A REWARD--AND THAT'S JUST THE KIND OF DAY I LIKE.

FOR ONCE EVERYTHING IS GOING GOOD FOR DONALD BLAKE--AND SINCE THOR HAS A WAY OF TAKING CARE OF HIMSELF, THERE'S NOT MUCH MORE I COULD ASK FOR...

I WAS EVEN BLESSED BY BRENDA BARCLAY'S WARMTH--AND REMINDED AGAIN THAT HELPING PEOPLE IS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT...

AND, AS DON BLAKE CLIMBS INTO BED AND DRIFTS ASLEEP...

WH-WHAT THE--?! SOME GUY WITH A TAIL STANDIN' IN MID-AIR--WALKIN' RIGHT THROUGH THE WALL OF THAT BUILDING--?!

M-MUST BE TOO MUCH N-NIGHT DRIVIN'--HEADLIGHTS ALWAYS IN YER EYES--MAKIN' YA SEE THINGS...

MAYBE I BETTER GET HOME... CATCH SOME S-SLEEP...

INSIDE BLAKE'S BEDROOM, THE DEATH-DEMON HOVERS OVER HIS QUARRY.

FOR LONG MOMENTS, HE STANDS TRANSFIXED BY THE ENORMITY OF HIS DEED, NOT EVEN DARING TO BREATHE...

THEN A VIVID IMAGE FILLS HIS MIND--HIS YOUNG SON, WEEPING IN A COLD CORNER OF A LONELY ORPHANAGE.

HE REACHES DOWN TO CLAIM THE HELPLESS LIFE BEFORE HIM.

BUT THEN, AT THE LAST MOMENT...

NO! EVEN IF HE *IS* EVIL--I CAN'T DO IT! NOT EVEN FOR MY *SON*!

KRASHH!

EH--?! WHAT THE--?

LET ME GO! DON'T FORCE ME TO DO IT!!

SOME KIND OF DEMON--AND IT'S AS IF HE'S WRESTLING SOMETHING INVISIBLE!

INVISIBLE TO BLAKE'S EYES, YES--BUT TO DARKOTH THE DEATH-DEMON, MEPHISTO'S PRESENCE IS A TANGIBLE REALITY CAST IN NIGHTMARE!

DO IT! KILL HIM! CLAIM HIS BODY! GIVE ME HIS SOUL! THEN YOU CAN BE WITH YOUR SON FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!

NO--! LET GO OF ME!!

BLAKE SCRAMBLES FROM THE BED, SLAMMING HIS WALKING STICK TO THE FLOOR...

AND... WHY DOST THOU STRUGGLE SO? WHAT ART THOU--?

ENOUGH! ATTACK HIM! KILL HIM!

AND MEPHISTO **HURLS** DARKOTH INTO THE FRAY...

THOU WOULDST ATTACK ME, DEMON?

VERY WELL--THEN LET THE BATTLE BE JOINED!

NO! I WON'T DO IT!!

ODIN'S BLOOD! MINE URU HAMMER PASSES RIGHT THROUGH HIS BODY!

AND NOW HE FLEES--MELTING THROUGH THE VERY WALL!

BUT WHO *IS* HE--AND WHY HATH HE COME HERE... ONLY TO *FLEE?*

AND THE WAY HE SPOKE TO HIMSELF, SEEMINGLY TORN BY CONFLICTING DESIRES...

'TIS CLEAR THAT ONLY IN THE FACE OF A SECOND CONFRONTATION WILL THESE MYSTERIES BE SOLVED.

THERE--FAR IN THE DISTANCE.

HE HEADS WEST--TOWARD THE VERY EDGE OF THE CITY.

AND, MILES AWAY, THE DEATH DEMON COMES TO A HALT IN ONE OF CHICAGO'S OUTLYING FOREST PRESERVES...

IT'S MADNESS--THIS WHOLE THING IS MADNESS!

WHAT CAN I DO NOW--?

I CAN'T KILL BLAKE--OR ANYONE ELSE, FOR THAT MATTER--AND YET I CAN'T RETURN TO THE RANKS OF THE DEAD EITHER...

...NOT SINCE MEPHISTO INFUSED ME WITH THIS FALSE SEMBLANCE OF *LIFE.*

AM I DOOMED--IN THIS HALF-LIVING, HALF-DEAD FORM TO WANDER THE EARTH FOREVER?

WHAT CAN I -- WAIT! MY *SON!* THE ONLY THING I CARE ABOUT!

IF I COULD JUST LOCATE HIM MAYBE, I COULD...

NO-- I COULD NEVER *SHOW* MYSELF TO HIM, NOT IN *THIS* FORM, BUT IF I COULD JUST SEE *HIM*... IF I COULD JUST--!

NEVER, DEATH DEMON! NEVER SHALL YOU SEE YOUR CURSED SON AGAIN! YOU HAVE FAILED IN YOUR CHARGE, REFUSED TO FULFILL YOUR END OF THE BARGAIN--

--AND SO I MUST NOW *FORCE* YOU TO DO SO!

INFUSING YOU WITH LIFE WAS NOT ENOUGH! NOW I MUST ALSO FILL YOU WITH THE PROPER ATTITUDE-- WITH THE POWER OF SHEER, NAKED *EVIL!*

AND THE CITY-BOUND FOREST GLOWS CRIMSON UNDER ME-PHISTO'S FURY.

AT THE VERY SAME MOMENT, HIS FLIGHT POWERED BY THE MYSTIC URU HAMMER MJOLNIR, THOR ARCS OVER THE CITYSCAPE TOWARD THE FOREST PRESERVE.

THE RED GLOW FROM YON TREES-- IT MUST BE THE DEMON!

YET MAYHAP I SHOULD APPROACH IN STEALTH AND CAUTION...

AND SO HE DOES--AND THIS TIME, HIS PRESENCE UNSUSPECTED, MEPHISTO'S FORM IS NOT CONCEALED FROM HIS EYES...

NOW THE EARLIER MYSTERIES BE RENDERED CLEAR!

THE DEMON DID NOT STRUGGLE WITH *HIMSELF...*

'TWAS THE EVIL INFLUENCE OF MEPHISTO HE GRAPPLED--AND STRUGGLES 'GAINST E'EN NOW!

THE DEAL, DARKOTH-- BLAKE'S SOUL FOR YOURS!

NEVER! BURN ME ALL YOU WANT, DEVIL! I WON'T DO IT!!

THEN 'TIS ALL *MY* FAULT! MEPHISTO SEEKS VENGEANCE UPON ME FOR OUR EARLIER BATTLE-- AND THIS "DARKOTH" IS BEING USED AS A MERE PAWN!

NEVER, YOU SAY? HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN YOUR ***SON,*** DESMOND PITT, LANGUISHING FATHERLESS IN A HOMELESS HOME--WEEPING WITHIN THE COLD GRAY WALLS OF AN ORPHANAGE--?

AGAIN THE IMAGE--EVEN MORE VIVIDLY NOW--AND THIS TIME IT STUNS HIM.

HIS RESISTANCE IS MOMENTARILY DROPPED--AND THE MOMENT IS LONG ENOUGH TO LET MEPHISTO'S SEETHING INFLUENCE ENTER HIM, TRANSFORMING HIM INTO A PERFECT PAWN.

*... A DEATH DEMON OF **TRUE EVIL.***

AND IT IS THEN, TRAGICALLY AFTER THE FACT, THAT THOR MAKES HIS PRESENCE KNOWN...

HOLD, MEPHISTO! NO LONGER WILL I PERMIT THEE TO TORMENT THIS INNOCENT CREATURE!

YOU ARE TOO LATE, THOR! DARKOTH IS NO LONGER INNOCENT!

EH--?! BUT HE... HE WAS RESISTING THEE SO FIERCELY--!

INDEED, HE IS NOW *MINE!*

YOU MUST DIE, BLAKE-- *DIE!!*

AND, IN PEALS OF LAUGHTER LIKE THUNDER BLASTING BRIMSTONE, THE IMAGE OF MEPHISTO FADES... WHILE THE BATTLE ENSUES.

FOR AN HOUR AND LONGER, THEY FIGHT, FILLING THE FOREST GLADE WITH THE SOUNDS OF FURY AND RAGE.

FROM A DISTANCE, THOR'S OFFENSE IS INEFFECTUAL -- FOR HIS THROWN HAMMER PASSES HARMLESSLY, TIME AND AGAIN, THROUGH THE OTHER'S BODY.

AT CLOSE QUARTERS, HOWEVER, THE STORY IS DIFFERENT! IN DEALING PUNISHMENT TO THOR, DARKOTH IS FORCED TO **SOLIDIFY** HIS FORM -- AND SO, IN ORDER TO STRIKE BLOWS, HE MUST BE WILLING TO RECEIVE THE SAME.

AND AT THE END OF AN HOUR AND MORE, IT IS CLEAR THAT DARKOTH'S RAGE EQUALS THOR'S FURY...

HEAR ME, DARKOTH! JUST AS I VOWED TO BATTLE THY MASTER THROUGHOUT ALL ETERNITY, SO TOO SHALL I BATTLE THEE TO THE VERY ENDS OF TIME!

YOU SPEAK FAR TOO SOON, THUNDER GOD!

NO STALEMATE CAN BE ESTABLISHED UNTIL YOU'VE FELT THE POWER OF MY *FIREHORNS* -- THE ANTENNAE WHICH FEEDS ON MY OPPONENT'S *BRAINWAVES*...

... AND WHICH TURN THAT FOE'S OWN POWER AND WILL *AGAINST* HIM!

KRAKOOOM

BRATCH

TIME AND AGAIN, BLASTED BY THE CRIMSON FORCE, HE IS TOSSED AND TUMBLED LIKE A BROKEN RAG DOLL.

ANY OTHER BEING WOULD HAVE FALLEN IN DEFEAT AT THE FIRST BLAST.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE, AND IN ONE SEARING MOMENT, THOR BEARS THE FULL BRUNT OF HIS OWN AWESOME INDOMITABLE WILL...

BUT NOW, SUMMONING HIS LAST DREGS OF STRENGTH AND COURAGE, THOR RISES TO MAKE A BOLD, FINAL STAND...

VALIANTLY WITHSTANDING THE RAVAGING BLASTS OF CRIMSON, THOR LIFTS MIGHTY MJOLNIR HIGH--CALLING UPON HIS AUTHORITY AS LORD OF STORMS TO SUMMON FORTH BOILING CLOUDS AND CRACKLING BOLTS OF LIGHTNING...

I SAY THEE *NAY*, DARKOTH! THOU ART NOT TRULY EVIL--THIS I KNOW--AND I SHALL NOT PERMIT THEE TO ENACT THE EVIL OF ANOTHER!

JUST AS MEPHISTO HATH INFUSED THEE WITH THE ESSENCE OF HIS EVIL, SO WILT I INFUSE THEE WITH THE VERY ESSENCE OF *LIGHT*--

--AND THUS *CANCEL* THE CORRUPTION WITHERING THY SOUL!!

LIGHTNING FLARES DOWN TO SHEATHE MJOLNIR IN SEETHING WHITE FIRE--THEN LEAPS FORTH FROM THE HAMMER TOWARD DARKOTH...

IT IS MET, HALFWAY BETWEEN THE TWO COMBATANTS, BY A CRIMSON BOLT FROM THE DEATH DEMON'S FIREHORNS...

A SIZZLING, TREMBLING STASIS OF WHITE AND RED STRETCHES BETWEEN THE TWO FOR LONG MOMENTS...

THEN, SLOWLY, IN-EXORABLY, THE LIGHTNING BEGINS TO PREVAIL--PUSHING BACK THE CRIMSON...

...FARTHER...

...AND YET FARTHER...

...UNTIL --

AGH-H!!

THOR-- FORGIVE ME! I DIDN'T MEAN TO--!

SAY NO MORE, DARKOTH! WELL DID I KNOW THAT THY TRUE INTENTIONS WERE PERVERTED BY MEPHISTO-- AND NOW, LEST TOO MUCH OF THE LIGHT OVER-COME THEE...

NO! DON'T STOP, THOR! PLEASE--! THE LIFE I HAVE NOW IS ***FALSE***-- AND THE PRODUCT OF ***EVIL!***

I... I AM RIGHTFULLY DEAD-- THOUGH WRONGFULLY CLAIMED BY MEPHISTO!

PLEASE, THOR, I BEG YOU-- CLEANSE ME OF HIS EVIL--AND LET ME GO TO MY RIGHTFUL REWARD!

BUT I... I CANNOT WILLFULLY SLAY THEE...!

YOU ***WON'T*** BE KILLING ME-- I'M ***ALREADY DEAD!*** YOU'LL SIMPLY BE FREE-ING ME FROM MEPHISTO'S GRIP! PLEASE! ***I BEG YOU!***

AND IF YOU REFUSE, THOR, I'LL ***FORCE*** YOU TO DO IT! I'LL FIGHT YOU FOREVER IF I MUST!

THERE IS A LONG SILENCE IN WHICH DARKOTH PLEADS ONLY WITH HIS EYES -- EYES WHICH HAVE STARED FULL UPON HELL'S RELENTLESS TORMENT, AND WHICH NOW PASS THE HIDEOUS SIGHT ONTO THOR.

IT IS **MORE** THAN ENOUGH TO SWAY THE DECISION.

HAMMER RISES HEAVENWARD-- AND DARKOTH IS BATHED IN GLORIOUS WHITE LIGHT...!

HE CRUMPLES, SPENDING HIS LAST BREATH ON THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS TO HIM...

MY...MY... SON.

AND THEN HE SLIPS, WITHOUT PAIN, INTO THE TRUE DEATH WHICH IS HIS REWARD...

NOOO!!

I HAVE BEEN CHEATED! NOW NEITHER SOUL IS MINE!

BUT I SHALL AT LEAST RECLAIM DARKOTH'S SOUL-- EVEN IF IT TAKES ALL MY DEMONS OF HELL TO DO SO!

SCREAMING, MOANING, GIBBERING, THEY SWARM UP FROM THE RING OF FIRE...

BACK, DEMONS! THE ONE YOU SEEK IS NOT THINE TO CLAIM--

-- AND WITH MY LAST JOT OF STRENGTH WILL I DEFEND HIS BODY FROM THY FOUL TOUCH!

DO YE *HEAR* ME?! NEVER WILL I SURRENDER THE SOUL OF ONE SO NOBLE!

NEVER!!

BACK, DEMONS! BACK INTO THE FLAMES WHICH SPAWNED THEE!

THEN, AS THE RING OF FIRE DIES TO A FLICKER...

WELL, MEPHISTO? WELL, EVIL ONE?! IS THAT "*ALL* YOUR DEMONS OF HELL"--?!

I AWAIT THEE, MEPHISTO! *I AWAIT THEE!*

WELL, MASTER--? SHALL I SUMMON THE OTHERS?

SHALL WE SEND MORE UP TO ATTACK HIM? SHALL WE--

SILENCE, YOU FOOL!

FHRAM

NO, WE SHALL *NOT* ATTACK HIM FURTHER! CAN'T YOU SEE WHAT HE'S DONE, YOU FOOL?!

HE'S WON! HE'S *WON AGAIN!*

ABOVE, A HARSH GRATING FILLS THE GLADE--AS RIVEN ROCK HEALS ITSELF...

I THANK THEE, FATHER... I THANK THEE FOR THE STRENGTH WHICH THOU HAST GRANTED ME IN MY EFFORT TO PRESERVE THIS MORTAL'S SOUL...

'TWAS HIS RIGHT, AND HIS REWARD... FOR SELDOM HAS ANY MORTAL SO FIERCELY OPPOSED SUCH EVIL.

FAREWELL, DARKOTH... FAREWELL DEATH-DEMON...

FAREWELL, *DESMOND PITT.*

LET PEACE BE THINE.

DR. BLAKE! I WAS JUST ABOUT TO CANCEL YOUR FIRST APPOINTMENT!

OH... I, AH, HAD TO PERFORM SOME OTHER TREATMENT ON THE WEST SIDE, MRS. BARCLAY...

I TOLD YOU THE NAME WAS *BRENDA*, DR. BLAKE--AND THIS IS MY HUSBAND TOM. HE DROVE ME TO WORK AND I THOUGHT I'D SHOW HIM THE OFFICE...

GLAD TO MEET YOU, DOCTOR--THANKS TO YOU, WE HAVE SOME GOOD NEWS. NOW THAT BRENDA HAS A JOB AGAIN, WE'VE DECIDED TO ADOPT A CHILD.

REALLY? WELL, CONGRATULATIONS!

YES, WE'D LIKE A SON.

A SON, EH...? A *SON!* OF COURSE! AND I KNOW JUST THE CHILD *FOR* YOU! HE'LL BE PERFECT!

A WEEK LATER, AT ROOSEVELT ORPHANAGE...

WELL, IT WAS A LONG WAY TO COME, BUT YOU WERE RIGHT, DOCTOR! HE'S A *BEAUTIFUL* BOY--!

AND I'M SURE HE'S GOING TO BE VERY HAPPY WITH US IN HIS NEW HOME...

SMILING FROM FAR, FAR AWAY, DESMOND PITT AGREES...

NEXT **THE SCARAB STRIKES!**

TALES OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS™

ON A BROKEN, BLACK ROCKED CRAG DEEP IN ASGARD, THE FORCES OF EVIL HAVE GATHERED... LED BY **LOKI**, GOD OF DARK MISCHIEF, AND BY **TYR**, GOD OF WAR...

BELOW LIES THE HOME OF THE GODDESS *IDUNN*, KEEPER OF THE LIFE-APPLES!

AND BEFORE US LIES THE MEANS TO OUR FINAL VICTORY-- THROUGH THE DOWN-FALL OF *ODIN* AND ALL HE DOTH HOLD DEAR!

DOUG MOENCH
Scripter
ALAN KUPPERBERG
Penciler
JACK ABEL
Inker
JANICE CHIANG
Letterer
CHRISTIE SCHEELE
Colorist

THE GOLDEN APPLES OF IMMORTALITY

BURN IT, FIRE DEMON! BURN THOU IDUNN'S HOME WITH THE BLAZING TOUCH OF THINE OWN BODY!

AYE, FRIEND LOKI--AND 'TIS MINE TO TAKE THE GODDESS HERSELF CAPTIVE!

SOON...

STRUGGLE, *IDUNN*--WRITHE AND SQUIRM LIKE A PINNED BEAST! 'TWILL ONLY ADD MORE SPICE TO OUR TRIUMPH!

THOU HAST GONE MAD, LOKI! THE GOLDEN APPLES CHARGED TO MY CARE BY ALL-FATHER ODIN HIMSELF **ARE** SACRED--THE VERY SOURCE OF THE GOD'S LIFE AND IMMORTALITY!

AYE--WHICH MAKES THEM ALL THE MORE PRECIOUS AS A PRIZE!

BUT THOU CAN NOT *STEAL* THEM--!

WE ALREADY HAVE, FAIR GODDESS, WE ALREADY *HAVE*.

LEAVING THEIR NEWLY FORGED ALLIES TO PREPARE FOR THE COMING CONFLICT, LOKI AND TYR VENTURE ALONE WITH THE STORE OF STOLEN APPLES TO THE GIANT WORLD ASH **YGGDRASIL...**

CACHE ENOUGH OF THE APPLES FOR OUR OWN USE IN THE HOLLOW BOLE OF YGGDRASIL ITSELF, FRIEND TYR.

AYE, LOKI--AND THEN MAY WE TEMPT THE SERPENT WITH THE *REMAINING* GOLDEN FRUIT...

CIRCLING THE TREE'S VAST GIRTH, THEY FIND THE AWESOME **SERPENT OF MIDGARD** TOILING AT ITS FAVORED TASK, AS IS ITS WONT WHEN NOT HARRYING MIDGARD...

STILL GNAWING AT YGGDRASIL'S THIRD ROOT, SERPENT?

AYE, GOD OF MISCHIEF--'TIS THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE AND KNOWLEDGE BE ODIN'S MOST POWERFUL WEAPON. THUS, BY UNDERMINING THE TREE DO I UNDERMINE ODIN--BUT AS MUCH AS I DO GNAW, THE ROOT DOTH EVER SEEM TO RESIST ME.

THEN LISTEN THOU TO A BETTER PLAN, A WAY OF *DIRECTLY* UNDERMINING ODIN--YEA, OF *DESTROY-ING* HIM...

THE GOLDEN APPLES OF IDUNN--THOSE WHICH PRESERVE THE YOUTH AND LIFE OF ALL THE GODS... INCLUDING ODIN.

IF THOU WERT TO GORGE THYSELF ON THEM...RATHER THAN GNAWING ETERNALLY AT YON BITTER ROOT...

THE SERPENT IS SWIFT TO GLEAN THE POINT--AND TO DEVOUR EVERY LAST APPLE IN A SINGLE SWALLOW.

NOW, FRIEND TYR...NOW WE *WAIT!*

AT LAST COMES THE TIME--

-- WHEN ODIN BIDS THE WARRIORS THREE TO FETCH MORE APPLES FROM THE GODDESS IDUNN...

AND NONE TOO SOON, SAYETH MY GRUMBLING STOMACH.

PATIENCE, VAST VOLSTAGG--THE APPLES WILL BE OURS SOON ENOW.

BUT...

IDUNN'S HOUSE--'TIS *BURNED*, HOGUN!

AYE, FANDRAL--AND THE STENCH OF EVIL WILL LINGER LONG AFTER THE SMOKE HATH CLEARED.

ALREADY I FEEL OLDER BY YEARS--AND EMPTIER BY BUSHELS!

SO IT COMES TO PASS, ON THIS GRIM DAY FOR ASGARD, THAT THE DIRE NEWS IS CARRIED TO ALL-FATHER ODIN...

SHORN FOR ONCE OF POMP AND CEREMONY, THE FAITHFUL GATHER IN THE GREAT SQUARE. MISSING ONLY ARE ODIN'S SON, **THOR**, WHO RESIDES ON MIDGARD AND **JOLENA**, SHE WHO IS ODIN'S FORMER LOVE AND NOW QUEEN OF THE HINTER-LANDS...

ODIN'S PRESENT WIFE **FRIGGA SILENTLY NOTES** THE LATTER'S ABSENCE...

OUR VERY LIVES STAND THREATENED BY THIS CRAVEN ACT! WITHOUT THE GOLDEN APPLES WE SHALL ALL SOON AGE AND DIE!

MORE APPLES WILL GROW IN TIME, MY LIEGE...

IN *TOO MUCH* TIME, FANDRAL--AND BY THEN **WE WILL** HAVE BEEN WEAKENED NIGH UNTO THE POINT OF DEFEAT!

CALL ALL THE FAITHFUL TO GATHER HERE IN THE PALACE--YEA, EVEN ***HEIMDALL***. FOR WE FACE A THREAT FROM WITHIN FAR GREATER THAN ANY INVASION WHICH MIGHT BE MOUNTED ACROSS THE RAINBOW BRIDGE ***BIFROST*** FROM WITHOUT.

AS IF TO REINFORCE ODIN'S OMINOUS PRONOUNCEMENT, THE FORCES OF LOKI AND TYR MOVE EN MASSE TO SURROUND THE PALACE, BESIEGING ALL WITHIN...

EH--? 'TIS **QUEEN JOLENA**-- SHE WHOM I SAW SHARING LOVE WITH MY FATHER ODIN...

BUT OF ALL THOSE TO REMAIN OUTSIDE THE SECURITY OF THE PALACE... WHY JOLENA?

HAST THOU NOT BEEN CALLED INSIDE WITH THE OTHERS, FAIR QUEEN?

ODIN HATH FORSAKEN ME FOR THE GOOD OF ASGARD... AND, TOO, FOR THE GOOD OF HIS WIFE FRIGGA. HE RECENTLY CAME TO ME, FOR A FINAL TIME, TO GIVE ME THE NEWS OF HIS DECISION.

I ONLY LOVE AND RESPECT HIM FOR IT ALL THE MORE... AND, TOO, I AGREE IT MUST BE SO.

FORSAKEN HER--?! THEN I WAS *WRONG* ABOUT MY FATHER! AND AND AS A RESULT... WHAT HAVE I *WROUGHT?*

BUT EVEN AS LOKI BROODS IN STUNNED SILENCE, THE WAR-GOD **TYR CALLS** SNEERINGLY TO ODIN...

OUR RANKS STAND OPPOSED TO THEE, ODIN! THE GODDESS IDUNN ALREADY LANGUISHES AS OUR CAPTIVE--

--AS SOON YE SHALL *ALL* BE OUR CAPTIVES... LEST YE CHOOSE INSTEAD A LONG SIEGE IN WHICH YE STEADILY WEAKEN AND *DIE!*

AND TYR'S LAUGHTER IS DARK, AND CRUELLY BARBED, ON THE STILLED AIR.

NEXT: **TO RESCUE A GODDESS!**

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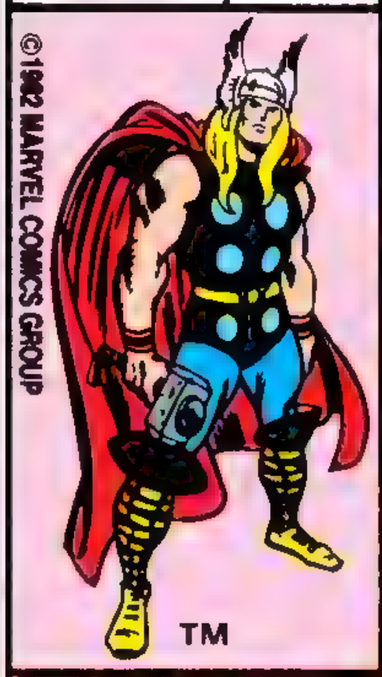

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THE MIGHTY THOR™

THE *SCARLET SCARAB*-- RAIDING LOST ARTIFACTS...?

OVER THOR'S DEAD BODY!

HANNIGAN + ANDERSON '82

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR— and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning— and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard....

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

DOUG MOENCH	ALAN KUPPERBERG	JON D'AGOSTINO	JANICE CHIANG	GEORGE ROUSSOS	MARK GRUENWALD	JIM SHOOTER
SCRIPTER	PENCILER	INKER	LETTERER	COLORIST	EDITOR	EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

THE SCARAB STRIKES!

A MAN... A MENACE... A GOD.

HE COMES FROM THE MODERN CHAOS CALLED THE MIDDLE EAST--

--ARMED WITH A SUPER-NATURAL POWER SPAWNED AT A TIME WHEN ALL THE TREASURES OF EGYPT WERE BUT A FUTURE DREAM.

ONLY ONE BEING CAN HOPE TO STOP HIM-- **THE MIGHTY THOR,** IMMORTAL SCION OF ASGARD, LORD OF THE LIVING LIGHTNING!

CAIRO, TWO O'CLOCK ON A SUN-DRENCHED AFTERNOON: A JEEP SCREECHES TO A HALT IN FRONT OF THE FAMED MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITIES.

AUTOMATIC WEAPONS CHATTER INDISCRIMINATELY...

...AND THREE CRUEL-FACED MEN CUT A BLOODY PATH THROUGH THE PANIC.

<INSIDE--QUICKLY--BEFORE THE SOLDIERS COME!>

<WE GO STRAIGHT FOR THE **EYE OF HORUS**--AND WE STOP FOR NOTHING MORE, NOTHING LESS!>

<HERE! AND IT...IT IS EVEN MORE FABULOUS THAN WE-->

<DON'T STOP TO ADMIRE IT **NOW**, YOU FOOL!>

<PUT IT IN THE SACK AND LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!>

AND, LEAVING NINE BROKEN AND BLEEDING BODIES IN ITS WAKE, THE JEEP ROARS OFF.

ITS ENGINE HAS IDLED IN THE DUSTY STREET FOR LESS THAN TWO MINUTES.

CHICAGO, ELEVEN O'CLOCK ON A STAR-WASHED NIGHT...

TWO WEEKS AND THREE DAYS HAVE PASSED.

A SEEMING FIREBALL HURTLES, WHINING, STRAIGHT TOWARD THE ENTRANCE TO THE FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY.

INSIDE, A SECURITY GUARD TESTS THE LOCKS ON HIS LATEST ROUND...

FHRAMM

LET NO MAN STAND IN THE PATH OF THE SCARLET SCARAB!

THE HARSH, DEFIANT WORDS RESOUND THROUGH THE VAST MUSEUM HALL--YET THERE IS NO ONE, NOW, TO HEAR THEM.

HE STREAKS PAST THE UNCONSCIOUS GUARD AND BEYOND THE RECONSTRUCTED REMNANTS OF PRIMORDIAL LEVIATHANS, THEN SWOOPS DOWN A STAIRWELL TOWARD THE BASEMENT...

...AND ITS CACHE OF FABULOUS EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES.

HERE, THE STRANGELY GARBED FIGURE SWIFTLY SEARCHES EVERY EXHIBIT AND DISPLAY CASE IN THE HALL, HIS NARROWED EYES SCANNING MUMMY CASES, FUNERAL BARGES, LACHRYMAL VASES, POTTERY, JEWELRY, FURNITURE...

AND WHEN AT LAST HE HAS SEEN ALL...

IT IS NOT HERE!

...HIS RAGE SCARS THE MARBLED FLOOR.

EARLY THE NEXT MORNING ON MICHIGAN AVENUE'S "MAGNIFICENT MILE" LOCATION OF DR. DONALD BLAKE'S NEW MEDICAL OFFICES...

BLAKE HAS BEEN HERE SCARCELY A MONTH AND ALREADY THE NEWS SEEMS MONOTONOUS-- MORE TALK OF RENOVATING NAVY PIER, INCREASED BICKERING BETWEEN MAYOR BYRNE AND CITY COUNCIL, AND YET ANOTHER LOSS BY THE CUBS...

WAIT A MINUTE-- WHAT'S *THIS* TUCKED AWAY ON AN INSIDE PAGE-- SURELY DESERVING OF THE HEADLINE... HMM...

-SPORTS-
CUBS 7
KS 10

ANOTHER MUSEUM BREAK-IN, THIS TIME THE FIELD MUSEUM RIGHT HERE IN THE CITY...

...AND ONLY DAYS AFTER THE STILL UNEXPLAINED INVASION OF NEW YORK'S NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM.

"CURATORS AND AUTHORITIES ARE STILL CONDUCTING A CLOSE EXAMINATION, BUT THE ONLY APPARENT DAMAGE IS TO THE FLOOR AREA, AGAIN IN THE EGYPTIAN HALL..."

"...SIMILAR MINOR DAMAGE TO THE EGYPTIAN WING IN NEW YORK..."

"...AND AGAIN NOTHING SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN STOLEN OR--"

TRIBUN

DR. BLAKE, IT'S TIME FOR YOUR FIRST PATIENT-- THE GENTLEMAN DOESN'T HAVE AN APPOINTMENT, BUT I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIT HIM IN BEFORE MRS. LEIBOWITZ ARRIVES...

FINE, MRS. BARCLAY--SEND HIM IN.

JUST A LUMP ON THE NOGGIN, DOC-- NOTHING SERIOUS, I DON'T THINK, BUT THE MISSUS WANTED ME TO CHECK IT OUT.

WELL, YOU WERE BOTH RIGHT--IT'S ALWAYS WISE TO MAKE SURE, BUT IN THIS CASE I'D PRESCRIBE NOTHING STRONGER THAN ASPIRIN.

BY THE WAY, HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'LL BELIEVE IT, DOC-- IN FACT, I'M NOT SURE IF *I* BELIEVE IT.

I HAD TO FLIP A COIN TO DECIDE IF I SHOULD COME SEE YOU OR GO TO A PSYCHIATRIST.

OH? SOMETHING STRANGE HAPPENED?

STRANGE? TRY WEIRD--BETTER YET, TRY *BIZARRE!*

I WAS CRUISING ALONG LAKE SHORE DRIVE LAST NIGHT, COMING BACK FROM A POKER GAME ON THE SOUTH SIDE, AND JUST WHEN I GET TO THE STRETCH BY THE YACHTS THERE, YOU KNOW?

...I SEE THIS... THIS...WELL, THIS *RED THING* STREAKING THROUGH THE SKY...

...AND SO HELP ME, DOC, I COULDA *SWORN* IT WAS A *MAN.*

MADE ME SWERVE RIGHT UP ONTO THE CURB--SMACKED INTO A POLE AND BOPPED MY HEAD ON THE STEERING WHEEL.

I SEE. WELL, MAYBE THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE IN TOWN.

NAW--I'VE SEEN PLENTY OF PICTURES OF THE HUMAN TORCH, BUT THIS GUY WASN'T LIKE THAT...

THIS GUY WAS...*SCARY,* ESPECIALLY THE WAY HE SEEMED SO *DETERMINED,* ZOOMING STRAIGHT FOR THE MUSEUM LIKE THAT.

THE MUSEUM?

UH, MRS. BARCLAY, GET ME *DR. SHAWNA LYNOE* ON THE PHONE, WOULD YOU?

SHAWNA? YES, I'M FINE--BUT LET ME ASK YOU SOMETHING...

IS THERE ANY PLACE IN THE CITY, ASIDE FROM THE FIELD MUSEUM, WHERE EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES MIGHT BE STORED?

SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE ORIENTAL MUSEUM ON THE SOUTH SIDE, DON--IT SPECIALIZES IN EGYPTIAN RELICS.

WHY? WANT TO TAKE IT IN THIS SUNDAY?

AH, SURE, MAYBE WE *CAN* GO THERE TOGETHER SOME TIME...

...BUT RIGHT NOW, I'D RATHER VISIT THE PLACE ON MY *OWN*--

--AS THOR!

RAPPING HIS OAKEN WALKING STICK ON THE FLOOR, THE LAME PHYSICIAN TRANSFORMS INSTANTLY TO THE IMMORTAL GOD OF THUNDER...

... AND IS SOON SOARING SOUTHWARD OVER THE CITY.

THIS MAY BE BUT A FOOL'S MISSION--BUT 'TIS A PRECAUTION WORTH TAKING.

MOMENTS LATER, AT THE ORIENTAL MUSEUM...

FEE-YEW--LOOKIT THE GOLDEN BOY!

YEAH--IT'S THOR!

'TIS A SMALLER PLACE THAN I IMAGINED--BUT AS SHAWNA DID STATE, 'TIS AMPLY FILLED WITH EGYPTIAN ARTIFACTS...

IF THOU ART THE CURATOR, I WOULD SPEAK WITH THEE.

HUH? WHY, YOU...YOU'RE THOR!

STAR WARS

O-OF COURSE--W-WE CAN TALK IN MY OFFICE--IN THE B-BACK.

AND WHEN THE CURATOR'S INITIAL SHOCK HAS ABATED...

HAS ANYTHING STRANGE OCCURRED OF LATE?

AH...WELL, I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD...

OH, WHAT THE DEVIL--WHY NOT? IF I CAN'T DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH AN AVENGER... THEN WITH WHOM CAN I DISCUSS IT?

I WAS APPROACHED YESTERDAY BY THREE MYSTERIOUS MEN--APPARENTLY EGYPTIAN--WHO TRIED TO SELL ME SOMETHING THEY PURPORTED TO BE PRICELESS... AND WHICH, THEY HINTED, MIGHT EVEN BE THE FABLED EYE OF HORUS.

I NOTIFIED THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY.

THEN CLEARLY THERE BE VILLAINY AFOOT. WILT THOU GRANT THY COOPERATION IN A SCHEME TO STOP IT?

WELL, IF IT'S ANYTHING IRREGULAR, I'M NOT SURE I CAN--

HEAR ME OUT, MORTAL--THEN MAKE THY DECISION...

NIGHT--AND A BIZARRE SCARLET FIGURE SCREAMS DOWN FROM THE SKY...

INSIDE THE ORIENTAL MUSEUM. ALL IS HUSHED GLOOM.

THE DOORKNOB JIGGLES AGAINST ITS LOCK--THEN FALLS STILL FOR A SINGLE MOMENT...

...BEFORE THE SCARLET SCARAB ENTERS BY MORE EXPLOSIVE MEANS.

FRATCH

BUT EVEN BEFORE ALL THE SPLINTERS HIT THE FLOOR--

--THE LIGHTS BLAZE ON--

--AND THE CURATOR CRIES OUT...

NOW, THOR!

STAND FAST, VILLAIN--THOU HAST BEEN CAUGHT IN THE VERY ACT OF ATTEMPTED THEFT!

WHO--?! THAT AMERICAN SUPERHUMAN--*THOR!* YOU DARE ACCUSE *ME* OF THEFT?!

YOUR KIND HAS SYSTEMATICALLY LOOTED THE TREASURES OF EGYPT FOR CENTURIES--AND YOU *DARE* CALL *ME* A THIEF?!

NOW SEE *HERE*, MISTER!

EVERY ITEM HAS BEEN ACQUIRED LEGITIMATELY--WITH THE FULL UNDERSTANDING, PERMISSION, AND COOPERATION, OF THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT!

SILENCE! I AM NOT NOW CONCERNED WITH ANY OF THE RELICS ON VIEW! I AM HERE FOR ONE THING ONLY--

--THE SACRED AND PRICELESS *EYE OF HORUS!* WHERE *IS* IT, BASE DEFILER OF THE BLACK LAND?

IT'S NOT HERE! I *SWEAR* IT!

LIAR!

I HAVE TRACKED THE THREE THIEVES FROM MY HOME-LAND TO THIS COUNTRY--AND NOW TO THIS VERY CITY! I *KNOW* THEY HAVE COME TO THIS MUSEUM! WHERE *ARE* THEY? WHERE IS THE *STATUE*?!

BE WARNED! THE MORTAL IS UNDER *MY PROTECTION!*

OH...MY...GOODNESS!

THE MYSTIC HAMMER MJOLNIR SNAPS BACK INTO THOR'S HAND--EVEN AS HE SURGES FORWARD WITH ALL THE FORCE OF A THUNDERBOLT!

AND IF THOU WOULD SEEK TO INJURE HIM--

BROK T

--THOU MUST FIRST PASS THROUGH *ME!*

AND YOU BE WARNED, THUNDERER! THE RUBY SCARAB AROUND MY NECK MULTIPLIES MY STRENGTH A *THOUSANDFOLD*--

THEN IT SEEMS THY POWERS ARE MIGHTY INDEED--

--AND CONVERTS MY OWN BODILY ENERGIES INTO CRIMSON BOLTS OF SHEER FORCE!

KNOW TOO THAT IT ALSO SHIELDS ME IN A PROTECTIVE AURA!

--AND WHETHER THOU ART TRUE VILLAIN OR MERE MISGUIDED ZEALOT...

...OUR BATTLE SHALL BE ONE TO *REMEMBER!*

SKASH

KRUMP

STOP IT! YOU'RE HARMING THE MUSEUM! YOU'LL DESTROY EVERYTHING!

BOTH COMBATANTS IMMEDIATELY HALT, CHASTENED BY THE REPERCUSSIONS OF THEIR FURY...

HOLD, SCARLET ONE! IF BATTLE WE MUST, THEN LET US DO SO OUTSIDE--WHERE NEITHER MORTAL NOR RELICS MAY SUFFER NEEDLESS INJURY.

VERY WELL, THUNDER MAN-- *OUTSIDE.*

AND THOUGH THE SCARLET SCARAB IS DULY IMPRESSED BY THOR'S CONCERN--

FZZAP-

AP-AP

--THE TRUCE IS LESS THAN BRIEF.

AND NOW THAT WE GRAPPLE HAND TO HAND FOR THE FIRST TIME, THUNDER GOD, A *NEW* FACET OF MY RUBY SCARAB IS REVEALED...

THY STRENGTH-- TIS E'EN MORE OVERPOWERING THAN BEFORE-- AND GROWING GREATER WITH EACH PASSING MOMENT.

INDEED--FOR THE RUBY *ABSORBS* THE POWER OF WHOSOEVER OPPOSES ITS *WEARER*...

...FORCING YOU NOW TO FACE A SINGLE, STARK, INEVITABLE TRUTH...

NO ONE CAN DEFEAT THE *SCARLET SCARAB*-- NOT EVEN *YOU!*

HE SAPS MY STRENGTH--MAKES IT *HIS OWN!*

BUT NOT FOR NOTHING HAS THE GOLDEN-HAIRED WARRIOR LONG BEEN HAILED AS MIGHTY..

NO, SCARLET ONE... I...I CANNOT PERMIT MYSELF TO FALL UNDER THY DOMINION...

EVEN AS HIS LAST RESERVES OF STRENGTH ARE SAPPED BY THE ARCANE GEM, HE DEFIES THE INEVITABLE, STEELING HIMSELF FOR A LAST EXPENDITURE OF WILL...

AND WHILE YET A SINGLE BEAT REMAINS IN MY HEART...

...THOR SAYS THEE NAY!!

STOP

REET

THOUGH HE HAS SHATTERED THE SCARAB'S POWER-SIPHONING GRIP, THOR KNOWS HE HAS MERELY EVADED DEFEAT. HE MUST SWIFTLY FOLLOW, WITH A FRESH ASSAULT OF HIS OWN, IF VICTORY IS TO BE HIS!

I NOW KNOW BETTER THAN TO GRAPPLE WITH THEE HAND TO HAND, SCARLET ONE! FROM THIS MOMENT ON, OUR BATTLE SHALL BE DECIDED BY--

IT IS TOO LATE, THUNDER GOD!

I HAVE ALREADY STOLEN TOO MUCH OF YOUR STRENGTH!

THE RUBY SCARAB AROUND MY NECK FILLS ME WITH YOUR OWN POWER--A POWER WHICH CAN *NEVER* BE STIFLED!

FRAKT

YOU CANNOT HOPE TO CONQUER US *BOTH!*

THEN BY MY POWER AS GOD OF STORMS, I SHALL FACE BUT *ONE* OF THEE!

BLACK CLOUDS BOIL ABOVE THE THUNDER GOD'S HEAD...

LIGHTNING LICKS DOWN TO CARESS HIS UPHELO URU HAMMER...

THEN, ON HIS SILENT COMMAND, THE LIGHTNING ABRUPTLY FLARES FROM HAMMER'S METAL TO FOE'S NECK...

...AND THE RUBY SCARAB IS SUNDERED FROM ITS SETTING--STRAIGHT INTO THOR'S HAND.

FSHOOM

KZZAKT

BY MY BIRTH-RIGHT AS LORD OF THE LIVING LIGHTNING, I DO *SEPARATE* THEE FROM THE *SOURCE* OF THY POWER!

NO!!

THE RUBY'S POWER IS NOW MINE, SCARLET ONE--AND OUR BATTLE--HAS ENDED.

ENDED? YOU CHOOSE NOT TO *FINISH* IT--BY *CRUSHING* ME?

AYE, SO I CHOOSE. AS VICTOR, I COMMAND THEE TO ACCOMPANY ME INSIDE THE MUSEUM, WHERE THOU MIGHT LISTEN TO REASON...

I UNDERSTAND THY FEELINGS, SCARLET ONE. THE ARTIFACTS OF MY OWN PEOPLE, THE NORSE, WERE MADE MOSTLY OF WOOD, AND SO HAVE LARGELY DECAYED IN OUR HARSHER CLIMATE.

WHAT FEW RELICS REMAIN ARE TO BE TREASURED--AND I ENVY THEE, SON OF EGYPT, FOR HAVING SO MUCH TO TREASURE. BUT I ASSURE THEE ALSO THAT THIS MORTAL HAD NO HAND IN STEALING ANYTHING.

NOW--EXPLAIN THY ACTIONS.

"MY FATHER WAS *DR. ABDUL FAOUL*, ALSO AN ARCHEOLOGIST, AND AT HIS DEATHBED A DECADE AGO, I WAS PRESENTED WITH A GIFT...

"...A SMALL CASK TO BE OPENED AFTER HIS DEATH.

"OPEN IT I DID, AND INSIDE I DISCOVERED THREE THINGS-- MY FATHER'S JOURNAL, SOME STRANGE COLORFUL RAIMENT, AND A PHOTOGRAPH OF A RUBY SCARAB.

"THE JOURNAL EXPLAINED TO ME THE SIGNIFICANCE OF IT ALL. THE RUBY SCARAB WAS A PRE-EGYPTIAN ARTIFACT IMPUTED TO BE AN OBJECT OF GREAT POWER. FOR YEARS ABDUL FAOUL SEARCHED FOR IT...

"DURING WORLD WAR II, HE AT LAST FOUND IT, AND USED THE MIGHT OF THE *SUB-MARINER* AND THE ORIGINAL *HUMAN TORCH* TO UNEARTH IT FOR HIM. WITH THE RUBY IN HIS GRASP, MY FATHER WAS TRANSFORMED INTO EGYPT'S FIRST SUPER-CHAMPION... THE *SCARLET SCARAB!* *

"AS THE SCARAB, MY FATHER USED HIS POWERS TO DEFEND OUR LAND, ENDEAVORING TO EXPUNGE *ALL* FOREIGN INVADERS FROM EGYPTIAN SOIL.

* SEE *INVADERS* #23 & 25.

"BUT AFTER THE WAR, THE RUBY SCARAB MYSTERIOUSLY VANISHED AND MY FATHER WAS FORCED TO RETIRE. HE SPENT THE FINAL YEARS OF HIS LIFE SEARCHING FOR IT ANEW. IT HAD BECOME MY DUTY TO CONTINUE THE SEARCH--FOR ONLY WITH THE POWERS OF THE SCARAB COULD I FULFILL MY FATHER'S LAST REQUEST-- TO BECOME A CHAMPION OF EGYPT AS HE HAD BEEN!

"FOR YEARS, I SEARCHED, FOLLOWING ONE LEAD AFTER ANOTHER, TRAVELLING THROUGHOUT THE WORLD...

"DISCOURAGED, I DECIDED TO RETURN TO THE VERY SITE WHERE MY FATHER HAD FOUND THE RUBY SCARAB. TO MY UTTER AMAZEMENT, THERE IT WAS, AGAIN LYING ON THE PRECISE SPOT WHERE IT HAD BEEN FOUND FORTY YEARS EARLIER!

"THE HIERGLYPHICS ON THE TOMB WALL WERE CRYPTIC, BUT SEEMED TO INDICATE THAT THE SCARAB WOULD SOMEHOW--PERHAPS SUPERNATURALLY--FIND ITS WAY BACK TO ITS PROPER RESTING PLACE.

"FASHIONING MYSELF A NEW COSTUME, I BECAME THE ***SECOND*** SCARLET SCARAB WITH MY POWERS I SET FORTH TO BATTLE THOSE WHO WOULD PREY UPON MY PEOPLE OR ITS ANCIENT TREASURES!

LIKE THE THREE MEN WHO OFFERED TO SELL ME A PRICELESS RELIC...

...WHICH THEY HINTED WAS THE ***EYE OF HORUS!***

I INFORMED THE POLICE AT ONCE--AND THEY TOLD ME JUST THIS AFTERNOON THAT THEY THINK THEY KNOW WHERE THE THIEVES ARE LOCATED.

I'M SURE THEY NOTIFIED THE EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES--AND EVEN THOUGH THEY MAY NOT ACCEPT YOU AS AN OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF YOUR GOVERNMENT, I'M SURE THEY'D TRUST ***THOR***.

SO IF YOU TWO COULD JUST QUIT FIGHTING AND ***WORK TOGETHER...***

AYE--IF THOU ART WILLING TO GIVE ME THY TRUST, SCARLET ONE.

YES, I BELIEVE YOU BOTH--AND SEE I WAS WRONG.

I GIVE YOU MY FULL TRUST, THUNDERER.

THEN I GIVE THEE ***THIS...***

AND SO, AS ALLIES, THEY STREAK OFF INTO THE NIGHT...

WOW.

THAT SETTLES IT--I ***AM*** GOING TO WRITE A BOOK ABOUT MY EXPERIENCES AS CURATOR OF THIS MUSEUM!

A SOUTH SIDE TENEMENT BUILDING NEAR THE SHORE OF LAKE MICHIGAN...

THE POLICE STAKEOUT HAS NOW BEEN IN FORCE FOR FIVE HOURS AND COUNTING...

YEAH, WE'RE SURE THEY'RE IN THERE, THOR -- ALL THREE OF THEM -- BUT WE'VE DECIDED TO WAIT THEM OUT WITH THE BUILDING SURROUNDED.

AS LONG AS THEY'VE GOT AMMO FOR THOSE AUTOMATIC WEAPONS OF THEIRS, I CAN'T ASK MY MEN TO RUSH THEM...

THOU NEED ASK NOTHING OF THY MEN -- FOR *WE* SHALL DO IT.

WHAT?! NOW WAIT JUST A MINUTE, BUSTER!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S PROMPTED YOU TO SUDDENLY ADOPT *MY* CITY FOR YOUR DO-GOODER ACT, BUT YOU CAN'T JUST GO BARGING AND BLUNDERING INTO A SITUATION LIKE --

BETTER THE COP HADN'T WASTED HIS BREATH.

COME, THOR.

SPEAKING WITH SUCH OFFICIALS IS ONLY A WASTE OF TIME!

WE MUST STRIKE *NOW* -- AND STRIKE *SWIFTLY!*

BRU-KOOM

-- BEFORE THEY HAVE A CHANCE TO DISPOSE OF THE *STATUE!*

〈I AM THE *SCARLET SCARAB*, DOG OF THE BLACK LAND--AND I AM YOUR *DOOM!*〉

〈THEY ARE ATTACKING! BUT... WHO IN THE NAME OF ALLAH--?!〉

BRRRRT

〈QUICKLY! OUT THE BACK WITH THE STATUE--TO THE BOAT!〉

SKRAKT

ONE DOWN-- TWO TO GO.

HOLD THY FIRE--LEST YE DAMAGE THE STATUE!

YOU HEARD THE MAN-- THEY'RE ALREADY IN IT UP TO THEIR EARS! WE MAY AS WELL LET 'EM FINISH IT--AND HOPE THEY DON'T SINK *COMPLETELY!*

〈START THE BOAT, FOOL! THEY ARE *AFTER* US!〉

〈YES, BUT... BUT WHO *ARE* THEY?!〉

〈NEVER MIND THAT--JUST *START THE BOAT!*〉

SHALL I HALT THEIR FLIGHT, THUNDER MAN, OR--

NAY, SCARLET ONE...

MY URU HAMMER MJOLNIR IS WELL-SUITED FOR SUCH TASKS.

<ALLAH PRESERVE US! A PILLAR OF WATER--RAISING OUR BOAT INTO THE AIR, AND-->

RAKT

IT IS SAFE, AMERICAN--

--I HAVE THE *EYE OF HORUS!*

AYE, SCARLET ONE--AND I HAVE ITS *THIEVES!*

MOMENTS LATER, ON THE ROOFTOP...

YOU UNDERSTAND, THUNDERER, THAT I WANT *THEM* AS WELL AS THE STATUE--TO BE RETURNED TO EGYPT FOR PUNISHMENT.

NAY--UNDER THE MORTAL'S LAWS, THEY MUST REMAIN HERE TO STAND TRIAL BEFORE THEY MAY BE EXTRADITED TO EGYPT...

...AND THE EYE OF HORUS MUST STAY, AS WELL, AS EVIDENCE.

NEVER! THE STATUE GOES BACK TO EGYPT WHERE IT BELONGS--IMMEDIATELY!

THEN WE MUST EITHER FIGHT AGAIN--OR SETTLE FOR THE PRIZE EACH HAS IN HAND.

THE SCARAB CONSIDERS THIS WITH NARROWED EYES...

YOU HAVE PROVEN WORTHY OF TRUST, THUNDER MAN. DO YOU GIVE YOUR WORD THAT THE THIEVES WILL BE RETURNED AFTER THEIR TRIAL... EVEN *WITHOUT* THE "EVIDENCE"?

AYE--MY OWN TESTIMONY WILL BE ENOUGH TO PROVE THEM GUILTY.

THEN IT IS DONE--WE EACH SETTLE FOR WHAT WE HAVE.

...WHICH NOW INCLUDES A *MUTUAL RESPECT.*

AYE, SCARLET ONE...AYE.

EPILOGUE: *THE ORIENTAL MUSEUM, SUNDAY AFTERNOON...*

WHAT'S THE MATTER, DON? FOR A FIRST VISIT, YOU DON'T SEEM SUITABLY IMPRESSED...

OR *HAVE* YOU BEEN HERE BEFORE?

UH...NOT EXACTLY, SHAWNA... BUT PERHAPS IN *SPIRIT.*

THE END

TALES OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS™

AND IT CAME TO PASS THAT THE GOODESS IDUNN, KEEPER OF THE GOLDEN APPLES OF IMMORTALITY, WAS HELD HOSTAGE BY THE GATHERED FORCES OF EVIL LED BY LOKI AND TYR...

EVEN THOUGH ENSIEGED IN THE PALACE ROYAL, SOME GODS THERE WERE WHO BRIDLED AT THE INJUSTICE AND EFFRONTERY...

CHIEF AMONG THEM WAS BALDER.

HEAR ME, LORD ODIN. THOUGH I HAVE FORSWORN THE WAY OF THE SWORD, I WISH TO LEAD A FORAY AGAINST YON VILLAINS, AND TO PLUCK IDUNN FROM THEIR VERY GRASP!

AYE, BALDER, 'TIS MY OWN WISH AS WELL--BUT WAIT THOU UNTIL FULL DARKNESS, WHEN THY CHANCES FOR SUCCESS BE MANTLED IN PROTECTION.

AND SO, UNDER THE COVER OF DEEP ASGARDIAN NIGHT, BALDER SLIPS FROM THE PALACE WITH A SMALL FORCE AT HIS HEELS...

AHEAD--THEY DO FEAST AND CAROUSE IN THE VERY STREET, EXPECTING NONE OF WHAT WE SHALL OFFER.

WITH NEITHER TYR NOR LOKI IN SIGHT, ODIN'S FORCES STRIKE...

BALDER--FANDRAL--HOGUN!

AYE, GODDESS--BUT FORGET NOT VOLSTAGG, LEST WE NEVER HEAR THE END OF IT!

THE RESCUE

DOUG MOENCH
SCRIPTER
ALAN KUPPERBERG
PENCILER
JOHN TARTAGLIONE
INKER
JANICE CHIANG
LETTERER
DON WARFIELD
COLORIST

THE BATTLE IS SHORT BUT FIERCE--WITH COURAGE AND SURPRISE ULTIMATELY TURNING THE TIDE.

DIDST THOU SEE ME STOUTLY SUNDER THY CAGE, FAIR IDUNN?

THOU DIDST MERELY *FALL* UPON IT, VAST VOLSTAGG.

STAY THY HARSH WORDS, GRIM HOGUN...

'TWAS A SEEMLY MISSION ON ALL ACCOUNTS, ACCOMPLISHED WITH MINIMUM OF VIOLENCE.

TYR! THE GODDESS HATH BEEN RESCUED-- AND STOLEN BACK TO THE PALACE!

WHAT?! THEN 'TIS THAT FOOL *LOKI'S* DOING! HE WAS TO *GUARD* IDUNN -- AND INSTEAD HE HATH *DISAPPEARED!*

WHERE *IS* HE?!

STILL, WHAT MATTER IF I WAS WRONG ABOUT MY FATHER ODIN? WHAT MATTER IF HE DOES *NOT* DESERVE THIS SIEGE AND ULTIMATE DEFEAT?

'TIS MY ONLY CHANCE TO SUCCEED WHERE IN THE PAST I HAVE EVER FAILED...

I AM HERE, WAR-GOD.

AYE-- BUT WHERE WERE YOU WHEN IT *MATTERED?*

THY NEGLIGENCE HAS COST US THE GODDESS IDUNN-- AND HAS RESTORED HER TO BALDER AND ODIN IN THE PALACE!

IT MATTERS NOT, TYR. WE STILL HAVE HER GOLDEN APPLES--ALL SAVE THOSE WHICH WE STORED IN THE GULLET OF THE SERPENT OF MIDGARD.

AYE... TRUE ENOUGH... BY THE TIME THIS SIEGE ENDS, WE SHALL STILL BE THE VICTORS.

EAT, LOKI -- WE MUST MAINTAIN OUR STRENGTH WHILE THOSE IN THE PALACE STARVE.

AYE... STARVE AND GRADUALLY AGE TOWARD A GOAL WHICH NO GOD HATH EVER BEFORE ATTAINED...

MORTAL DEATH.

EVEN AS THE RESCUE PARTY RETURNS, ODIN AND THE OTHER GODS HAVE BEEN WATCHING AND LISTENING FROM THE PALACE BALCONY...

LIARS AND DECEIVERS LOKI AND TYR MAY BE, BUT THEIR WORDS DO THIS TIME RING TRULY. ERE LONG WE SHALL WEAKEN... AND BECOME EASY PREY FOR THEM...

WHICH IS WHY I SAY WE MUST ACT *NOW!*

THE FORCES OF VILLAINY BE ALWAYS WEAK IN THE END!

AYE! UNLEASH US IN A FULL ASSAULT, ALL-FATHER-- TO CRUSH THE CRAVEN DOGS AND RECOVER THE GOLDEN APPLES!

BALDER SPEAKS THE WISDOM OF PLAIN TRUTH!

NAY, NOT WITH THE WISDOM OF TRUTH, FANDRAL-- BUT WITH THE BLIND HEART OF COURAGE.

NEVER WOULD I SHIRK FROM BATTLE-- WHEN THE CAUSE BE JUST, AND MORE THAN A PATH TO RUIN.

BUT FIGHTING NOW BE A LOST CAUSE-- WE MUST INSTEAD ESCAPE THE PALACE, AND STEEL OURSELVES FOR A LATER BATTLE STAGE ON OUR OWN TERMS.

BUT THEY'LL SIMPLY HUNT US DOWN FROM ONE END OF ASGARD TO THE OTHER--AS WE STEADILY AGE AND WEAKEN WITH EACH STEP OF THE FLIGHT! WHERE CAN WE GO--?

TO MIDGARD -- WHERE *THOR* CAN AID US! IF ANY GOD CAN DEFEAT THE GATHERED FORCES OF TYR AND LOKI--

BUT 'TIS *UNHEARD OF*, SIF! THE GODS FLEEING ASGARD--! NEVER COULD WE--

I SHALL BE THE JUDGE OF THAT...

...AFTER FIRST CONSULTING WITH THE ORACLE *MIMIR*.

THUS IS THE GRAVE QUESTION PUT TO MIMIR, THE ALL-KNOWING WELL OF FIRE...

AYE, ON MIDGARD THOU SHALT AGAIN BE TRUE GODS... AT LEAST IN CONTRAST TO THE MORTAL INHABITANTS THEREON...

AND THEREON THOU WILT HAVE NO NEED TO EAT OF THE GOLDEN APPLES--JUST AS THOR HAS NO NEED FOR THEM ON THE LOWER REALM.

THEN, ALL-FATHER...?

SO BE IT!

BUT BY YMIR'S ICY BEARD--WHEN THIS DEBACLE IS ENDED, HOW TYR AND LOKI SHALL PAY, AND PAY IN GRIEVOUS WAGES, FOR FORCING THIS IGNOMINIOUS FLIGHT UPON US!

NOW STAND YE BACK--AS I *PREPARE THE WAY!*

NEXT: THE CONCLUSION OF THE "SERPENT OF MIDGARD" SAGA--IN A FULL 22-PAGE EPIC...

TO EARTH--AND THOR!

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TM

THE MIGHTY

THOR™

ALAN S; KUPPERBERG AND WEISS

LAST STAND ON EARTH!

2:30 OF A TUESDAY AFTERNOON--AND **DR. DONALD BLAKE'S** CHICAGO OFFICE IS INVADED BY A MIRACLE MEANT FOR HIS EYES ALONE...

HEAR ME, DONALD BLAKE, WHO ART IN TRUTH MY SON THOR--HEAR ME AND HEED ME WELL!

THERE BE GRAVE TROUBLE IN ASGARD, HOME OF THE GODS AND TRUE LAND OF THY BIRTH! WE HAVE BEEN FORCED TO ***FLEE*** THE REALM ETERNAL--

--AND THOU MUST PREPARE THY-SELF FOR A VISIT BY ALL THE MAJOR GODS!

HERE--? *NOW*--? BUT--

WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO, DOCTOR? ARE YOU--

EH? UH... NO ONE, NURSE STEVENS, NO ONE!

JUST... UH... SOME-THING I *READ*...

NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I JUST REMEMBERED SOME URGENT BUSINESS.

PLEASE CANCEL THE REMAINDER OF THE DAY'S APPOINT-MENTS.

VERY WELL, DOCTOR, BUT THE PATIENTS WON'T LIKE IT. ARE YOU SURE IT ISN'T SOMETHING I CAN HELP YOU WITH...?

I'M SORRY, NURSE-- THIS IS THE WAY IT HAS TO BE.

ALLLL RIGHT.

IN HERE, ALL-FATHER...

THE PRIVATE ROOMS AD-JOINING MY OFFICE...

...WHERE THERE'S ENOUGH PRIVACY FOR THE LAME PHYSICIAN DONALD BLAKE...

...TO TRANSFORM...

BOOM

...INTO THOR THE MIGHTY, LORD OF STORMS, SCION OF ASGARD, AND THY OBEDIENT SON.

AND NOW, ALL-FATHER, I AM PREPARED TO RECEIVE THEE AND THINE.

Stan Lee PRESENTS:

THE MIGHTY THOR

THE SERPENT OF MIDGARD

CONCLUSION:

THIS BATTLE-GROUND EARTH!

DOUG MOENCH	SCRIPTER
ALAN KUPPERBERG	PENCILER
JIM MOONEY	INKER
JANICE CHIANG	LETTERER
GEORGE ROUSSOS	COLORIST
MARK GRUENWALD	EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER	EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

THE ROOM FLASHES WITH AN EFFULGENCE FROM BEYOND AND THEN THEY ARE HERE, ALL OF THEM--GRIM **HOGUN**, DASHING **FANDRAL**, AND VAST **VOLSTAGG**--**ODIN** HIMSELF, WIELDING HIS TRIDENT-SPEAR GUNGNIR...

...**HEIMDALL**, VALIANT GUARDIAN OF THE RAINBOW BRIDGE BIFROST--BRAVE AND NOBLE **BALDER**, AND ALL THE REST--BUT NONE MORE RADIANT NOR CHERISHED THAN **SIF**, THE ONE TRUE LOVE OF THOR'S HEART...

'TIS SO LONG, THOR, SINCE LAST I GAZED UPON THY FACE... THAT I... I

TIME ENOW FOR LOVE, SIF, WHEN OUR PRESENT PERIL HATH BEEN AVERTED.

FOR NOW, THOR, KNOW THAT THY BROTHER LOKI HATH CONSPIRED WITH THE WAR-GOD *TYR* TO STEAL THE GOLDEN APPLES OF IMMORTALITY.

WITHOUT THEM, AS YOU WELL KNOW, EVEN WE--E'EN THE GODS THEMSELVES--WILL BEGIN TO AGE... AND ULTIMATELY *DIE*.

THUS MUST WE REMAIN HERE ON MIDGARD UNTIL A PLAN IS CONCEIVED TO RETAKE ASGARD AND RECOVER THE GOLDEN APPLES.

AYE, HERE ON MIDGARD, BUT HARDLY HERE IN DONALD BLAKE'S SMALL DWELLING.

AWAIT ME, THEN, UNTIL I PREPARE A MORE SUITABLE PLACE.

AND, AS THOR LEAVES HIS APARTMENT, STREAKING INTO THE CHICAGO SKY BY THE POWER OF HIS ENCHANTED URU HAMMER, MJOLNIR...

AND NOW, AS THE THUNDERGOD HAS SAID, WE CAN ONLY WAIT.

AYE... AND HOW LONG, I WONDER, MUST THIS SMALL AND COLORLESS REALM CONTAIN THE MAJESTY OF SUCH AS VOLSTAGG?

ON ASGARD, MEANWHILE, THE FORCES OF EVIL LED BY **TYR** AND **LOKI** HAVE INVADED THE PALACE ONLY TO FIND--

THEY'RE ***GONE*** -- JUST AS I SUSPECTED WHEN WE COULD NO LONGER SEE ANYONE AT THE WINDOWS!

THEY'VE FLED, AND THERE'S ONLY ONE PLACE THEY COULD HAVE GONE -- TO MIDGARD! HEAR ME, LOKI -- WE MUST FOLLOW AND CRUSH THEM -- PREVENT THEM FROM EVER MAKING A BID TO RECLAIM ASGARD!

THEN... YOU ACTUALLY MEAN TO--

AYE -- TO STRIKE THEM DEAD, EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM -- YEA, AND MORE!

TO CRUSH MIDGARD ITSELF--

"-- WITH THE ***SERPENT!***"

AND SO THEY GATHER AT THE VERY EDGE OF THE SHINING REALM...

HEAR ME, SERPENT--THE FINAL DOWNFALL OF THY HATED ENEMY ODIN IS AT HAND!

ENTER NOW THE VAST SEAS OF THE VOID AND SWIM TO MIDGARD! WRAP THY BINDING COILS 'ROUND IT, PREPARING THE WAY FOR OUR INVASION!

STARK INTERNATIONAL ON LONG ISLAND...

--AND THAT BE WHAT I NEED, THOUGH I CANNOT REVEAL WHY.

NO EXPLANATION NECESSARY, FRIEND.

WHATEVER THOR WANTS, THOR'S GOT--PLUS A STAFF OF A DOZEN TO ATTEND TO WHATEVER ELSE YOU MIGHT NEED.

COME ON, I THINK I MAY HAVE JUST WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR...

HOW'S THIS? AN OBSOLETE COMPUTER COMPLEX--I HAVEN'T GOTTEN AROUND TO TEARING IT DOWN FOR THE NEW FACILITY YET...

...BUT YOU CERTAINLY WON'T BE BOTHERED HERE. IS IT SUFFICIENT FOR YOUR NEEDS?

AYE--AND THOU HAST MY THANKS, TONY STARK.

FORGET IT, THOR--THE PLACE IS JUST COLLECTING DUST.

AND HERE'S YOUR STAFF, AS PROMISED.

THY SPEED AND EFFICIENCY IS MOST IMPRESSIVE.

YOU JUST HIT ON THE NAME OF THE GAME IN MY LINE OF WORK, THOR.

SO LONG--USE THE PLACE IN GOOD HEALTH.

I APPRECIATE THINE AID, MORTALS... BUT NOW YE MUST PREPARE THYSELVES FOR THE LIKES OF WHICH YE HAVE NEVER SEEN BEFORE...

HEAR ME, ALL-FATHER! THE WAY HATH BEEN PREPARED! THOU MAYEST NOW APPEAR WITH THE OTHERS!

WH-WHO'S HE TALKING TO--?

WAIT! THE VERY AIR--IT'S SHIMMERING! AND...AND--

THE GODS APPEAR -- EACH ONE A DAZZLING FORM INSPIRING AWE...

THOU HAST DONE WELL, MY SON -- THIS CHAMBER IS AT LEAST MORE BEFITTING OUR STATURE, AND DOTH INDEED CALL TO MIND A NORSE LODGE.

...SAVE FOR AN INVOLUNTARY TWITCH OR TREMBLE HERE AND THERE, THE STAFF OF MORTALS STAND TRANSFIXED.

I'LL SAY ONE THING FOR THIS MIDGARD -- IT CREATES AN AWESOME HUNGER.

AYE -- CAN VICTUALS BE PROVIDED FOR ALL?

BUT STILL THE STARK EMPLOYEES STAND ROOTED, MERELY GAPING...

I SAID, MORTAL... CAN YOU PROVIDE VICTUALS FOR ALL?

V-V-VICTUALS... YES, VICTUALS, .. OF COURSE... AND BY VICTUALS, Y-YOU MEAN --

FOOD!

HE MEANS FOOD, DOLT -- IN VAST AMOUNTS!

ULP! O-OF COURSE!

FOOD! VAST AMOUNTS OF VICTUALS! RIGHT AWAY! LET'S GO!

A TRIFLE THICK ABOUT THE SKULLS, THESE MORTALS, BUT I WARRANT THEY MEAN WELL...

AND, TOO, 'TIS HARDLY EVERY DAY THEY HAVE A CHANCE TO BE NUMBED BY THE MAJESTY OF VOLSTAGG.

AND NOT LONG AFTER, THE BIZARRE FEAST COMMENCES...

'TIS NOT UNPLEASANT, THIS TASTE -- WHENCE DID THOU SAY THIS DISH CAME?

UH... FROM P-P-PIZZA HUT.

BUT THEN, A STORM ROLLS IN FROM THE NORTH, THOUGH IT SEEMS TO GATHER FROM EVERYWHERE, AND IT'S BOILING GLOOM SPOILS THE FEAST...

THE FLOOR ITSELF SHAKES--WITH VIOLENCE AND DISQUIETING SUDDENNESS.

IS THE FOOTING HERE *ALWAYS* SO TREACHEROUS?

'TIS CALLED AN EARTHQUAKE, VAST ONE.

QUICKLY STEPPING TO A BANK OF VIDEO MONITORS, THOR LOCATES A COMMERCIAL CHANNEL...

-- WORLDWIDE WEATHER HAVOC, AS SEVERE STORMS AND FLOODS BREAK ON EVERY CONTINENT, FOLLOWED BY QUAKES, BRUSHFIRES, MUD-AND-LANDSLIDES.

MOTHER NATURE IS CERTAINLY GIVING THE OLD PLANET A REAL BEATING...

CNN LIVE

SPECIAL REPORT

'TIS HARDLY "MOTHER NATURE", AS YON BOX PROCLAIMS--'TIS RATHER THE *SERPENT OF MIDGARD*, CONSTRICTING THIS LOWER REALM IN ITS COILS. IT COULD BE *NO OTHER!*

AYE, MY FATHER, AS I TOO HAVE SENSED--THOUGH 'TIS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT EVEN *LOKI* WOULD EVER RESORT TO SUCH DIRE LENGTHS.

AND, AT THE RIM OF ASGARD...

YOU SEE, LOKI--? VICTORY SHALL SOON BE OURS! ANCHORED TO THE WORLD TREE *YGGDRASIL*, THE SERPENT HATH BEGUN TO CRUSH MIDGARD!

AND NOW SHALL WE USE ITS LENGTH TO BRIDGE THE VOID TO ODIN AND THE OTHERS!

ONWARD, MY ALLIANCE OF JUSTICE!

TOO LONG HAS ASGARD SUFFERED THE WEAK RULE OF ODIN! TOO LONG HAVE THE OLD WAYS OF BLOOD AND STRIFE AND LUSTY VICTORY BEEN IGNORED!

KNOW THAT ODIN WILL BRAND THIS DAY *INFAMOUS*--AND BRAND *US* A GATHERING OF *EVIL*...!

THUS MUST ODIN FALL--AT LAST AND FOREVER!

FOR I TELL YOU WE ARE A FORCE FOR *GOOD*--A FORCE OF WRATH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS--AND DECAYING ASGARD'S ONLY HOPE FOR SALVATION!

I FEEL HIM... EVEN NOW... IN MY BONES...

THE SERPENT--? BUT... ART THOU CERTAIN, ALL-FATHER...?

AS IF ON CUE, LOOMING FROM THE STORM, THE HIDEOUS MAW YAWNS WIDE...

'TIS TYR THE WAR-GOD--AND LOKI!

AYE, THOR... AND STORM GIANTS, AND TROLLS, AND FIRE-DEMONS, AND--

AND ALL THE EVIL ASGARD CAN SUMMON, GRIM HOGUN.

INTO THE RAGING STORM, ODIN'S FAITHFUL WARRIORS STRIDE.

TYR'S HARSH VOICE BELLOWS FROM THE ROLLING THUNDER...

THY RUNNING ENDS HERE, ODIN! HERE--WHERE THY GODLY BLOOD SHALL FLOW! AND ONCE ASGARD IS MINE, SO TOO SHALL THIS LOWER REALM OF MIDGARD TREMBLE AT MY TOUCH!

ODIN IGNORES THE WAR-GOD, TURNING HIS BALEFUL GLARE INSTEAD ON THE GOD OF MISCHIEF--ON HIS OTHER SON--

I KNEW THOU WERT BEHIND THIS, LOKI, BUT NEVER DID I DREAM THAT EVEN *YOU* COULD BRING IT TO THIS...

...TO THE UNTHINKABLE POINT WHERE THOU WOULDST ACTUALLY SEEK THE DEATHS OF THY FATHER AND BROTHER!

LOKI LOOKS AWAY, AND IT IS TYR WHO SPEAKS FOR HIM...

AND WHY WOULD HE NOT? THY TIME IS PASSED, ODIN! THOU ART COMPLACENT-- WHEN ALL KNOW 'TIS A GOD'S WAY TO LIVE UNDER THE RULE OF FIRE AND BLOOD AND ETERNAL STRIFE!

AND LOKI NOW STANDS AT MY SIDE IN THE GREATEST STRIFE OF ALL...

...DOST THOU NOT, LOKI?

STILL LOKI REMAINS SILENT, FOR A SPAN OF TEN HEART-BEATS...

THEN--

NO.

I BEGAN THIS CAMPAIGN THINKING ODIN HAD BETRAYED HIS WIFE *FRIGGA* FOR THE LOVE OF *QUEEN JOLENA.*

BUT I WAS WRONG ABOUT MY FATHER--AND I STAND NOW READY TO PAY MY PENANCE.

MISCHIEF IS ONE THING, TYR--AND A THING I REVEL IN...

...BUT I HAVE RENOUNCED SHEER, NAKED *EVIL!*

AND YOURS HAS GONE TOO FAR!

I BEG FORGIVENESS AS I STAND READY TO BE THE FIRST TO FALL ON THE SIDE OF ALL-FATHER ODIN--

--FAITHFUL LORD AND RULER OF SHINING ASGARD, THE REALM ETERNAL!

THEN THOU SHALT RUE THIS DAY *FOREVER,* TRAITOR!

THOU SHALT DIE IN SQUIRMING *AGONY.*

BUT EVEN AS TYR'S WRATH IS REFLECTED IN THE STORM ABOVE--

--THOR FEELS NOTHING BUT THE RELIEF OF PRIDE.

MAYHAP THERE IS HOPE FOR MY HALF-BROTHER YET!

UNLESS THIS IS A TRAP...OR SOME OTHER MANNER OF DECEIT.

NO DECEIT, GRIM HOGUN. MY SON HATH SIMPLY COME LATE TO HIS SENSES...

AND NOW, TO LOKI'S SIDE!

FOR ASGARD!!

FOR ASGARD!

FOR THE REALM ETERNAL!

AND SO, IN THUNDER AND LIGHTNING AND LASHING RAIN, GODS AND MONSTERS CLASH--SWORD UPON SWORD, MACE AND HAMMER AND SPEAR WIELDED AGAINST FERAL FANG AND CLAW...

THERE ARE GIANTS HERE--FIERCE DEMONS, AS WELL--AND TITANS WHOSE POWER IS ONLY DREAMED BY MORTAL MAN...

IT IS A TABLEAU LONG ISLAND HAS NEVER BEFORE HOSTED, NOT EVEN IN THE STEAMY PAST WHEN AWESOME LEVIATHANS CALLED DINOSAURS CONTESTED THIS LAND.

AND IT IS A SIGHT WHICH EVEN THE SEASONED EMPLOYEES OF STARK INTERNATIONAL, LONG ACCUSTOMED TO THE DRAMATIC APPEARANCE OF AN INVINCIBLE IRON MAN--WILL NEVER FORGET.

DEEP WITHIN THEIR AWE, UNDER THE FEAR AND BEYOND THE WONDER, THEY UNDERSTAND WHAT TRANSPIRES BEFORE THEM--THEY KNOW, TOO, WHO IS DESERVING OF THEIR SYMPATHY.

THEY SENSE WHICH SIDE BATTLES IN VALOR AND WHICH SIDE FIGHTS WITH SAVAGERY--WHICH FACTION IS BLESSED WITH NOBILITY AND WHICH IS GREEDY AND GRASPING.

AND WHEN ONE OF THE NOBLE ONES--EVEN ONE SO IMPROBABLE AS VOLSTAGG--IS IMPERILLED...

...IT IS ENOUGH TO MAKE A MERE MORTAL BRAVE HELL.

BEHIND YOU!

EH? VALIANT VOLSTAGG AIDED BY A MORTAL WOMAN?!

AYE--AND HER COURAGE GOES NOT UNNOTICED BY ODIN!

ZOOOOSH

STAND BACK, MORTAL--THY SACRIFICE IS NOT NECESSARY.

THIS DAY THE GODS STAND READY TO SACRIFICE THEMSELVES FOR *THY* SAKE.

THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO DESCRIBE THE EFFECT OF ODIN'S CELESTIAL TOUCH AND STIRRING WORDS--HER SOUL SHIVERS.

BUT SHE OBEYS, STEPPING BACK FROM PELTING RAIN TO SHELTER--

--THERE TO WITNESS THOR'S STRUGGLE WITH A BERSERK STORM GIANT...

ENGAGED AT THE MOMENT, THOR, WITH OUR COMRADE HOGUN!

WHAT OF TYR, FANDRAL? WHERE IS HE?

AYE, THE GRIM ONE BATTLES ME--IN A CAUSE DOOMED LONG ERE HE HEFTED HIS MACE!

I HAVE YET TO BE DEFEATED, TYR, BY MERE WORDS.

NEARBY, WITH FIERY GUNGNIR, ODIN LAYS WASTE TO A HORDE OF WOLFLINGS...

NOR *SHALL* YE BE DEFEATED, HOGUN, BY WORD *OR* DEED--ONCE I REACH THY SIDE!

ONWARD, BALDER--FOR ASGARD!

AYE, SIF--FOR ASGARD *AND* MIDGARD!

AND DURING IT ALL EARTH IS RAVAGED BY ONE DISASTER AFTER ANOTHER -- TYPHOONS AND MONSOONS, QUAKES AND MUDSLIDES, FLOODS AND FIRES...

...AS THE SERPENT OF MIDGARD CRUSHES THE GLOBE IN ITS ETHEREAL COIL.

'TIS FUTILE, ODIN! EVEN IF OUR BATTLE IS WON, MIDGARD SHALL BE LOST!

I MUST VENTURE TO ASGARD AND DEAL WITH THE SERPENT--ERE IT *CRUSHES* THIS SPHERE!

THEN WE SHALL FIGHT ON IN THY ABSENCE, MY SON! GO WITH SPEED AND RETURN WHEN THOU CANST!

AYE, MY FATHER, AND WITH ME I SHALL TAKE A COMPANION--

--A LARGE AND UNWILLING ONE--

--HAMIR THE FISHERMAN!

THUS, BY THE POWER OF ENCHANTED MJOLNIR, THOR TRAVERSES THE LENGTH OF THE SERPENT TO ITS ROOT...

...ASGARD--THE SHINING REALM NOW BEREFT OF ITS RULING GODS.

ONCE THERE, THOR SWIFTLY STREAKS TO HAMIR'S ABODE ON A FJORD NEAR THE DARK SEA...

NOW, HAMIR-- THOU WILT TAKE ME OUT ON THY SHIP, INTO THE SEA OF ETERNAL DARKNESS -- WHERE I SHALL FISH FOR THE SERPENT OF MIDGARD!

VERY WELL, THOR-- YOU'VE DEFEATED ME SOUNDLY IN FAIR FIGHT, AND I AM FOR THE NONCE BOUND TO THY THRALL...

...BUT FIRST I MUST PREPARE FOR THE TREACHEROUS VOYAGE.

NO TRICKS, HAMIR, OR--

TRICKS, THOR?

WHY, SUCH WOULD *NEVER* ENTER MY MIND!

HA HA HA HA

BUT THE GIANT'S ROARING LAUGHTER--

--COMES TO AN ABRUPT AND SWIFT END.

BWHUD

I AM PLEASED YOU WERE MERELY PROVIDING ME WITH THE *BAIT*, HAMIR... AND NOT ATTEMPTING TRICKERY.

BUT SHOULDST THOU CHANGE THY MIND AND ATTEMPT ANY *SERIOUS* DECEIT--

-- I'LL USE THY *HEAD* FOR BAIT!

AND SO THE SAIL IS SET...

...AND THEY GLIDE OUT THROUGH THE MAJESTIC FJORD TO THE VERY EDGE OF THE OCEAN--

--THENCE INTO THE YAWNING VOID 'TWIXT ASGARD AND MIDGARD.

AND THERE, THE SHIP SAILS ON, AND EVER ON...

...UNTIL--

NOW, HAMIR, THOU SHALT SEE A DEMONSTRATION OF THE PRIME WEAKNESS AFFLICTING THEE AND THY KIND...

'TIS CALLED *GREED*.

AND THE SERPENT, NOT CONTENT WITH A WHOLE WORLD, IS HOOKED.

MAYHAP THOU ART RIGHT, THUNDER GOD, BUT THINE EFFORT IS STILL DOOMED TO FAIL.

NO ONE POSSESSES THE STRENGTH TO BOAT THE VERY SERPENT OF MIDGARD--NOT EVEN *THEE!*

YOU THINK SO, HAMIR?

WHAT DOES A MERE *GIANT*--

--KNOW ABOUT *STRENGTH?*

THUS ANGERED BY HAMIR'S SCOFFING, THOR STRUGGLES WITH EVER GREATER DETERMINATION...

...AND WITH THE INDOMITABLE STRENGTH AND WILL OF ONE BORN... A GOD!

*ULTIMATELY, THE SERPENT'S GRASP IS **SHATTERED.***

ON EARTH, IT IS AS IF A SWITCH HAD BEEN THROWN ON A VAST AND RUNAWAY MACHINE LABELED "DISASTER", SHUTTING IT DOWN INSTANTLY.

THE TIDAL WAVE--! IT'S COLLAPSING--RECEDING BACK TO SEA--AND NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON!

YOU SAID IT, MISTER--NEW YORK JUST CAME WITHIN A CAT'S WHISKER OF BEING SWAMPED!

AND EVERYWHERE ON THE GLOBE IT IS THE SAME-- EARTHQUAKES STILLED, FLOODS ABATED, STORMS HALTED--AS IF IN RESPONSE TO A MIRACLE.

IN THE SEA OF NOTHINGNESS BETWEEN ONE WORLD AND THE NEXT--A FINAL YANK OF UNIMAGINABLE POWER...

...AND THE SERPENT IS BROUGHT SPRAWLING ACROSS THE DECK OF THE FLOATING SHIP, ITS NETHER END DANGLING INTO INFINITY.

THOR! I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN IT WOULD BE THE GOLDEN-HAIRED ODIN-SON...

I HAVE WAITED A LONG TIME FOR THIS ENCOUNTER--AND NOW, LET IT BEGIN!

THE SERPENT SNAPS ITS JAWS, SWALLOWING BAIT AND HOOK ALIKE...

...AND THOR RISES, LIKE A BOLT OF CRIMSON AND BLUE, WHIRLING MJOLNIR THE DESTROYER BEFORE HIM!

WHUD

WHAM

FWHAM

HERE IN THE VOID, WHERE SPACE AND TIME KNOW NO NATURAL BOUNDS, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY HOW LONG THE BATTLE ENDURES...

A SPLIT SECOND ON EARTH CAN HERE SEEM AN ETERNITY...

THOOM

ON LONG ISLAND, ANOTHER BATTLE STILL RAGES...

FIGHT ON, HOGUN--I WILL SOON REACH THY SIDE!

AYE--BUT WHAT OF THOR, ALL-FATHER? WE CANNOT MAINTAIN SUCH FURY FOREVER! OUR FOES ARE FRESH--WHILE WE GROW WEAKER BY THE MOMENT! MIMIR LIED, CURSE HIM, WHEN HE CLAIMED WE WOULD HAVE NO NEED FOR THE GOLDEN APPLES HERE ON MIDGARD!

KEEP THE FAITH, GRIM ONE -- THOR SHALL YET PREVAIL! SEE YOU NOT THAT THE STORM HAS ABATED?

AYE, THOR HATH SUCCEEDED ALREADY -- OR AT LEAST DISTRACTED THE SERPENT FROM ITS RAVAGING OF THIS REALM!

FIGHT ON, GODS OF ASGARD -- AND TAKE HEART THAT THE THUNDERER SHALL SOON RETURN!

INDEED, ONLY MOMENTS LATER, THOR'S CONTEST COMES TO AN END...

ENOUGH, ODIN-SON -- I LOSE INTEREST IN THIS BATTLE WHICH CAN NEVER END.

NEITHER OF US CAN BEAT THE OTHER -- THAT MUCH IS CLEAR -- AND TO CONTINUE IS FOLLY. NOW WHAT IS IT YOU WANT?

AN END TO THE STRIFE ON MIDGARD -- AND RETURN OF THE STOLEN APPLES.

MY RAVAGING OF MIDGARD ENDED WHEN YOU HAULED ME ONTO THE SHIP. AS FOR THE STRIFE STILL CAUSED BY TYR AND THE OTHERS, I CAN HARDLY BE EXPECTED TO STOP THAT.

AND THE GOLDEN APPLES RESIDE IN MY GULLET -- UNDIGESTED, FOR THEY ARE NOT FITTING SUSTENANCE FOR ONE SUCH AS ME.

THEN RETURN THEM -- *NOW!*

AND SO THE APPLES OF IMMORTALITY ARE DISGORGED --

-- COLLECTED IN ONE OF HAMIR'S FISHING NETS --

-- AND TRANSPORTED, WITH THE BEATEN SERPENT TO THE WORLD TREE YGGDRASIL...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN TO DO WITH ME, ODIN-SON?

I MEAN TO RESTORE THINE AMBITIONS TO THEIR RIGHTFUL PLACE, SERPENT -- A PLACE OF FUTILITY.

TURNING A DEAF EAR TO THE SERPENT'S MANY PROTESTS, THOR BINDS HIM TO THE TREE'S ROOTS, THEREBY LASHING HIM TO THE COSMIC AXIS...

KNOW, SERPENT, THAT SHOULD THOU EVER AGAIN SEEK TO HARRY MIDGARD, I WILL RETURN--AND WE SHALL THEN BATTLE TO A MORE **CONCLUSIVE** END.

THE SERPENT MERELY GRUNTS...

...THEN RESUMES HIS LONG-INTERRUPTED TASK OF GNAWING YGGDRASIL'S THIRD ROOT.

ON EARTH, THOR'S RETURN IS LIKE A THUNDERCLAP--AND HIS WORDS ARE LOUD AND BOLD, STILLING THE FRAY...

HEAR ME, FAITHFUL OF ASGARD! THE GOLDEN APPLES ARE AGAIN THINE!

YOU MAY NOW RETURN TO ASGARD, THERE TO RESUME THINE IMMORTAL STATUS!

WHAT--?!

AYE, MY SON--BUT FIRST WE MUST WIN THE BATTLE HERE ON MIDGARD--ERE ENTERTAINING ANY THOUGHTS OF ASGARD!

AND METHINKS THE WEATHER HATH TURNED TOO FAIR FOR SUCH WORK, THOR.

SUMMON YE A **STORM** TO MATCH THE FIRE IN OUR BLOOD!

AND THE THUNDERER IS NOTHING IF NOT AN OBEDIENT SON...

SHRAK-CHOOM

AYE, MY FATHER--A STORM THOU SHALT HAVE!

THE WIND RISES TO A HOWL, AND THE RAINS SCREAM FROM THE SKY--AND WITHIN THE SOUND OF THE RUMBLING THUNDER IS HEARD THE HOOF-BEATS OF ODIN'S FURIOUS ARMY GALLOPING ON THE SAVAGE HUNT...

IT IS A PHANTOM ARMY, TO BE SURE, A LEGION COMPRISED OF SOUND ALONE--BUT IT IS A FURY MATCHED BY THE STALWART HEROES ON THE GROUND, HEARTENED NOW BY THE SIGHT OF RECOVERED APPLES AND INSPIRED BY THE BLAZING DISPLAY OF THOR'S POWER...

NOW, TYR--THOU CRAVEN WAR-GOD--WE SHALL *SEE* WHOSE RULE HAS BECOME COMPLACENT--

...AND WHOSE POWER IS *UNBENDING!*

DO... DO YOU SEE WHAT *I* SEE?

YEAH... BUT I DON'T THINK I'LL ADMIT IT LATER-- NOT WHEN I GO HOME TO THE REAL WORLD.

SOMETHING TELLS ME THAT BY TOMORROW... WE WON'T EVEN MENTION IT TO *EACH OTHER.*

IT IS LEFT TO ODIN TO DEAL THE FINAL BLOW...

ON THY *KNEES* TREACHEROUS ONE-- BEFORE THY *MASTER!*

TYR IS FELLED WITH A MIGHTY SWEEP OF ODIN'S SPEAR GUNGNIR.

AND WHEN IT IS DONE, THOR'S STORM ALSO CLEARS--PAINTING A RAINBOW TO MARK ITS PASSAGE.

LOOK! UP IN THE SKY... IT'S... IT'S *BEAUTIFUL!*

THY LONG ORDEAL IS FINALLY ENDED, MORTALS-- AND YOU HAVE BEEN GRANTED A GLIMPSE OF THE PATHWAY TO HEAVEN...

...THE BRIDGE TO SHINING ASGARD ABOVE!

AND AFTER WITNESSING THE VALOR OF A MORTAL WOMAN I BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND, AT LEAST A BIT, THINE ABIDING PASSION FOR THIS LOWER REALM.

BUT THOU, *LOKI*-- THOU HAST DISGRACED BOTH ME AND ASGARD ITSELF...

...ALTHOUGH, IT MUST BE ADMITTED THAT, AT THE MOMENT OF CRISIS, THOU DIDST FIGHT AT MY SIDE AS VALIANTLY AS ANY OTHER GOD.

INDEED, THINE ACTIONS MAY HAVE TIPPED THE BALANCE IN OUR FAVOR--AND BY THAT FACT THOU ART SOMEWHAT REDEEMED...

AS FOR THE WAR-GOD *TYR*, NO REDEMPTION IS POSSIBLE.

LONG SHALL HE SUFFER MY SUPREME DISFAVOR.

BUT FOR NOW... LET US *FEAST!*

AYE--LONG AND HARD--ON *TRUE* SUSTENANCE!

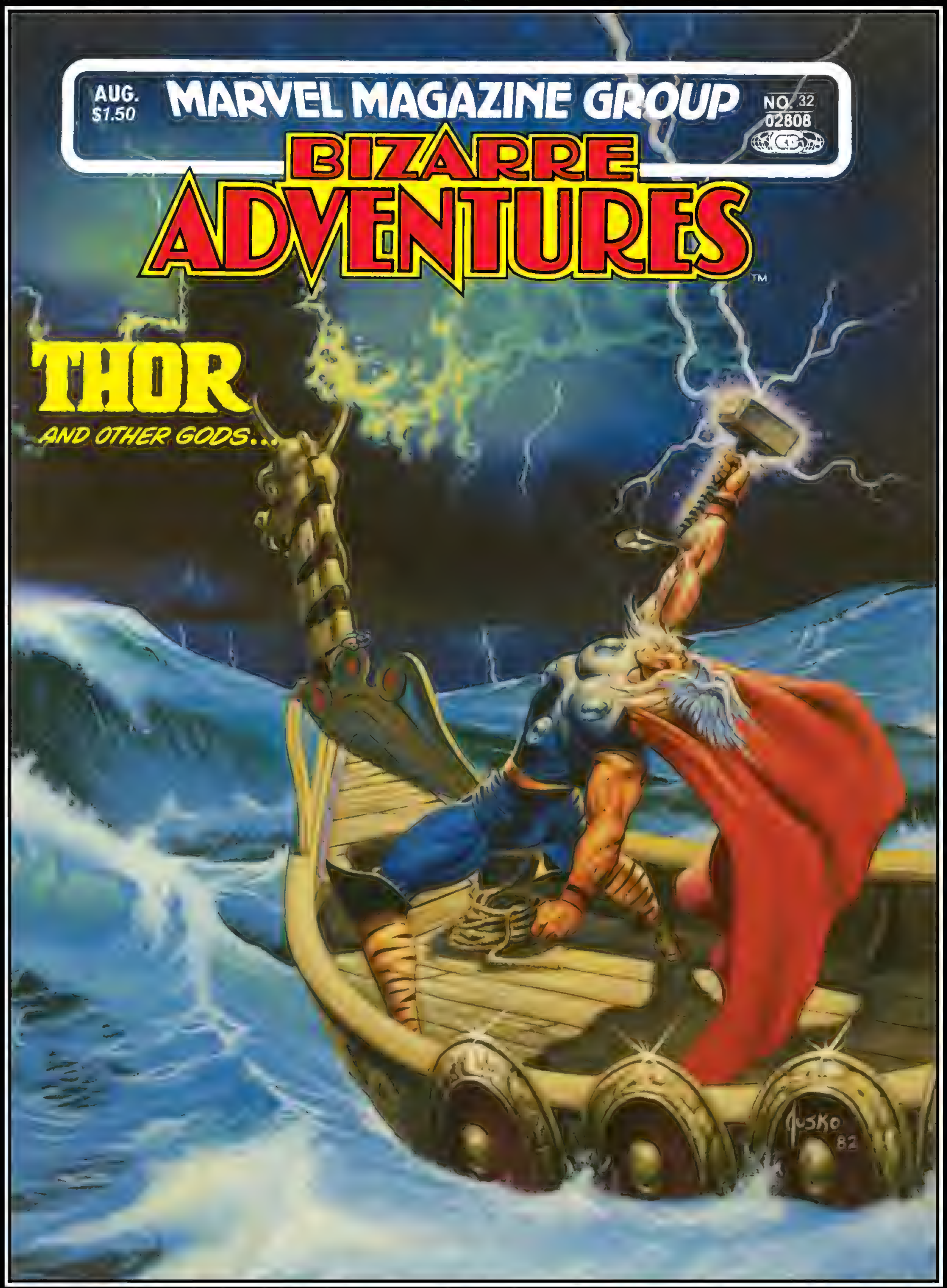
TASTE OF IT, FAIR SIF--AND KNOW THE REWARDS OF THY FAITH AND COURAGE.

WITH A PLEASURE, THOR, TRANSCENDED ONLY BY THE SIGHT OF THY FACE.

AND THIS NIGHT ALL IS WELL IN HEAVEN... AND ON EARTH.

END

Special Bonus: *Bizarre Adventures* #32 (August 1982) focused on tales of gods, including a Thor story stunningly illustrated by John Bolton and scripted by Alan Zelenetz, who soon after became the writer of *The Mighty Thor* color comic.



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August 1982

All men have need of the gods.
— Homer

Godfrey Daniel!
— W.C. Fields

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DEARLY BELOVED:

We are gathered together today to follow in the path of some gods. Not any gods, my brothers and sisters – special gods, wonderful gods, *gods you never even heard of!*

Except for Thor. I do believe you have heard of Thor, one and all – the thunder-bringer who has been a *rock* upon which the mansion of Marvel Comics has stood lo these many years. But I say unto you, you have *never seen Thor as you will see him here.*

Praise be.

And there is a funny little Japanese god who lives under a bridge: a god to laugh with, to laugh *at,* until the part where the samurai cuts off the head... But no, brothers and sisters, I will *not* tell you the story. You *will* turn to page 18 and read it, yes, yes.

You have *already* read the story of Dedalus and Icarus – if you have ever studied Greek mythology in school, that is. But again I say unto you that you have not known it as you will know it now, because you have never before known the gods to be cute, cuddly *animals!*

Animals? Did I say animals? And are not *horses* animals? And does not the story that starts on page 36 begin with a horse race and end with the creation of a new god? A new *kind* of god? A god of – I'm gonna say it, brothers and sisters and I want you to say it with me – *a god of luck!*

Next, there is *The Prophet: a parable,* I say, of how faith is not rewarded because the gods are always willing to make an exception.

Touch this page. Touch the printing on this magazine and feel *the power.* The power of our final tale wherein the mighty fall yet find redemption – not to mention respect – in the unlikeliest of places.

Redemption, did I say? Oh, brothers and sisters, redeem yourselves by joining hands and singing. Sing the praises of these wonderful, wonderful pages that are blessing the fingers that hold them. Sing hallelujah.

Amen.

NOTE: I did not mention Bucky Bizarre. Blasphemy, brothers and sisters, is not righteous.

SEA OF DESTINY

"TIME BEFORE TIME, BEFORE THE GLEAMING STARS WERE FLUNG ACROSS THE FIRMAMENT, BEFORE THE GOLDEN WALLS OF ASGARD WERE RAISED HIGH-- THE ANCIENT SEA, THE DEEP AND TIMELESS SEA, WAS FASHIONED FROM THE GIANT YMIR'S BLOOD, THE ENDLESS OCEAN SET ABOUT THE EARTH, A SILVER NECKLACE, GLITTERING WITH FOAM...

"WHEN MEN WERE MADE, THEY HEARD THE OCEAN CALL, THE HAUNTING SEA BECKON, 'VOYAGE, COME AND SEEK STRANGE COASTS AND SHORES AND FABULOUS TREASURES!' AND MEN STILL SEEK... SOME FIND THEIR GOLDEN FORTUNE ON THE WAVES, WHILE SOME ARE DROWNED...

...AND BURIED IN THE WHALE'S GRAVE." LORD ODIN, SHALL I CONTINUE?

AYE, LET THY POETRY FLOW THE NIGHTLONG, DEAR SKALD, FOR THE MUSIC OF THY VERSE ENTWINES WITH THE PLEASANT SMOKE OF SACRIFICE WHICH RISES TO OUR CELESTIAL HEARTH FROM MORTALS WORSHIPPING BELOW.

THIS PERFUMED MELODY SETS ALL OUR SENSES ON EDGE. NOW SING!

SO SHALL I ADD MY SONG TO THE GAIETY HERE IN ASGARD, RADIANT HOME OF THE GODS.

INDEED, IT IS A TUMULT OF GAIETY, AND HERE'S ALL MANNER OF FESTIVITY AND GAME...

...AS GOD AND GODDESS CELEBRATE THE REVEL OF THE SUN-MONTH MIDGARD—MEN CALL JUNE, THIS FEAST OF THE SUMMER'S FRUITFULNESS.

THERE'S A LAD, FRIDLEIF-- A TANKARD OF MEAD IF YOU HOLD YOUR OWN, SON!

UNH!

COME, HERVAR, TUMBLE HIM AND THOU SHALT TASTE MY KISSES, SWEETER THAN ANY HONEYED WINE!

THOU NEEDS NOT THE EXCUSE OF A FEAST TO FILL THY BELLY, EH VOLSTAGG?

TRUE, FANDRAL, TRUE. BUT METHINKS THE THUNDER GOD, WHO DELIGHTS IN DOWNING MANY A GOLDEN DRAUGHT OF MEAD, SHOULD BE LOUDEST IN TOASTING ALL PRESENT GOOD COMPANY?!

"WHATEVER COULD PROVOKE HIS ABSENCE THIS HOUR?"

WOULD THAT I COULD PARTAKE OF THE FESTIVITY, BUT I MUST REPAIR TO THE TWILIGHT WELL AT THIS TIME OF ANNUAL CELEBRATION.

ALL HAIL THOR, MASTER OF MJOLNIR!

ALL HAIL THOR, LORD OF THE LIGHTNING!

ALL HAIL THOR, PRINCE OF ASGARD!

THOR TRAVELS IN DARKNESS BENEATH THE TEEMING WORLD OF ASGARD...

...DOWNWARDS TO THE GNARLED AND KNOTTED ROOT OF YGGDRASILL, THE MIGHTY ASH, TREE OF LIFE AND AXIS OF THE UNIVERSE...

...WHERE THE THREE NORNS, URD, SKULD AND VERDANDA--FATE, BEING, AND NECESSITY--GUARD THE SACRED WELL OF WYRD, THE SPRING OF DESTINY.

THOU KNOWST WELL MY REASON FOR COMING, WEIRD SISTERS.

AYE AND THUS--THY FATHER ODIN HATH ENJOINED THIS RITUAL OF PENANCE TO MARK THE ANNIVERSARY OF THAT DAY THOR DID RASHLY CHALLENGE NECESSITY AND FATE.

FOR 'TIS IN OUR POWER TO PLAY BEFORE THINE EYES, WITHIN THE WATERS OF THE SPRING AND WELL, SCENES OF YORE. THUS DO WE ENSURE THY PRESENT REMEMBRANCE OF LESSONS PAST.

PEACE! GAZE, PRINCE THOR, THE CHARM'S WOUND UP...

COME JOIN NOW, SISTERS, HAND TO HAND...

...FIRE TO SEA, WIND TO LAND...

DEEDS LONG DONE, DESIRE AND FEAR, IN THESE WATERS NOW APPEAR!

GAZE PEACE THE CHARM WOUND UP PEACE GAZE THE CHARM PEACE THE CHARM'S WOUND UP

AND THE WELL DARKENS...

...THEN REVEALS...

...A MID-SUMMER STORM ON THE NORTH SEA OF MIDGARD MANY YEARS BEFORE...

THE SWIFT, DRAGON-PROWED SHIP OF EARL HARALD BLOODAX WAS APTLY DUBBED "THE LONG SERPENT" BY ITS VIKING MARINERS.

WRITHING AND TWISTING THROUGH THE WAVES, IT HAD TAKEN A BOLD CREW ON MANY A RAIDING PARTY THESE LAST FEW WEEKS.

THEN DISASTER STRUCK. FIRST, TREACHERY ON SHORE. INVITED AS GUESTS, HARALD'S MEN WERE CRUELLY SLAUGHTERED BY DOUBLE-DEALING KINSMEN.

THOSE WHO MADE IT BACK TO THE SHIP WERE SWEPT INTO GREATER SORROW BY A ROARING OCEAN STORM.

HEAVY SALT WAVES CARRIED THEM--ALL BUT ONE--INTO WATERY DESOLATION BEYOND ALL COMFORT OF HUMAN VOICE.

NOW THE LONG SERPENT, BUFFETING ENDLESSLY, AIMLESSLY IN THE CENTER OF THE STORM, IS MANNED BY THAT ONE.

HE IS RUNOLF, A MAN OF STUBBORN WILL WHO ONCE STOOD AT THE HEART SIDE OF HARALD BLOODAX.

WOULD THAT I HAD DIED OF WOUND FEVER ON SHORE AND EARNED VALHALLA FOR A WARRIOR'S DEATH. BUT NOW--TO DROWN IGNOBLY IN THE WAVES? TO LEAVE BEHIND NO BATTLE REPUTATION AND LOSE ALL HOPE OF IMMORTAL FAME?

OH, THOR, PRINCE OF GODS AND MASTER OF THE STORMING ELEMENTS, TAKE PITY UPON RUNOLF! LET ME NOT DIE FORGOTTEN LIKE A LOWLY CORNER MAN ASSIGNED LAST SEAT ON THE MEAD-HALL BENCH! PRESERVE ME TO DO BATTLE ONCE AGAIN, REDEEM MY NAME, AND AVENGE MY CHIEFTAIN'S DEATH!

THE DESPERATE PRAYER OF THE HEARTSICK VIKING ARCS UPWARDS, A FLAMING BIRD TOWARDS ASGARD...

...WHERE THOR IS ENTERTAINING A ROLLICKING BAND OF SUN-MONTH REVELERS WITH PRODIGIOUS FEATS OF SINEW AND STOMACH.

WOULD 'TWERE I THE HANDSOME PRINCE CLUTCHED TO HIS FRAME SO!

NAY, WHAT'S ONE HORSE? PUT DOWN THY CUP, THOR, AND BALANCE THE ONE STEED WITH ANOTHER! HA HA!

CURSE ME FOR A DWARF IF HE ISN'T HIS FATHER'S SON!

SUDDENLY A FLAMING BIRD...

...CASTS ITSELF UPON THE SMOKING HEARTH-ALTAR.

OH, THOR, PRINCE OF GODS AND MASTER OF THE STORMING ELEMENTS, TAKE PITY UPON RUNOLF! LET ME NOT DIE FORGOTTEN LIKE A LOWLY CORNER MAN ASSIGNED LAST SEAT ON THE MEAD-HALL BENCH! PRESERVE ME TO DO BATTLE ONCE AGAIN, REDEEM MY NAME, AND AVENGE MY CHIEFTAIN'S DEATH!

I MUST BEG HASTY LEAVE TO DEPART THIS CELEBRATION...

...SIRE, HEARTRENDING PRAYERS ARE UTTERED IN MY NAME, AS THOU HAST HEARD, BY A LONE MORTAL HARRIED ON MIDGARD SEA. I MUST GO TO PRESERVE HIM FROM THE STORM!

NAY, MY SON, 'TWOULD BE A THANKLESS TASK. THE LENGTH OF HIS LIFE AND DAY OF HIS DEATH WERE FATED LONG AGO. RUNOLF'S TIME HATH RIPENED TO ITS END.

BUT I CANNOT LET PETITION OF ONE WHO WORSHIPS FAITHFULLY GO UNANSWERED!

EVEN THE ALL-FATHER BOWS TO THE IRON YOKE OF FATE. A DECREE OF THE NORNS OF DESTINY IS IMMUTABLE!

I IMPLORE THEE, SIRE! THE MORTAL APPEALS FOR NAUGHT BUT HEAVEN'S MERCY! SURELY--BUT THOU SHAKEST NO, FATHER ...THEN TO THE NORNS THEMSELVES I'LL GO...

...THOR CANNOT IGNORE SO EARNEST A PLEA!

URD, VERDANDA, SKALD, I KNOW THOU SPINNEST THE THREAD OF LIFE ABOUT EACH MAN AND GOD. I ASK. THEE NOT TO CUT SHORT RUNOLF'S YEARS. HE HATH ENTREATED MERCY IN MY NAME.

FATE DECREES-- ILLNESS, AGE...

...AN ENEMY'S SWORD...

...A STORM AT SEA...

...AND NONE, ASGARDIAN, MAY CONTRAVENE. BEHOLD THE SHIELD OF DEATH'S SHADOW, ENGRAVED UPON'T RUNOLF'S NAME AND FIGURE IN REPOSE.

SUCH DECREE IS IRREVOCABLE.

AT VERY LEAST FORE-STALL YOUR JUDGMENT, SHOW MERCY 'TIL I HAVE ENDEAVORED...

PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE, ALL DO WE DECLARE, NORN SISTERS THREE. BUT DESTINY KNOWS NOT MERCY, AND NONE MAY ALTER FATE'S DECREE.

THOU HAST HEARD ALL, AND STILL THOU TURNEST TOWARDS MIDGARD, FRIEND THOR?

STAUNCH HEIMDALL, I WILL TRY MY FATE --

AND WITH WHAT MIGHTY WEAPON, PRINCE, DOST THOU PREPARE THY CHALLENGE?

I RELY UPON MY STRONG RIGHT ARM AND SIMPLE MJOLNIR--

NO BIRD FLIES WITH WISHES AS ITS WINGS, MY PRINCE. DOST THOU NOT SEE THAT ODIN HIMSELF HATH NOT SHOULDERS BROAD ENOUGH TO HOLD THE SUN FROM ITS COURSE?

BUT 'TIS PALE JUSTICE. THIS RUNOLF IS A GOOD MAN, HIS PRAYERS ARE WORTH MORE WEIGHT--

THOU SEEKEST EVEN-HANDED JUSTICE, BUT FATE RENDERS HEAVY JUDGMENT, SWIFT AND UNQUESTIONABLE. THE TWO ARE NOT THE SAME.

'TIS ONLY A SLAVE PERMITS HIS MESSAGE TO BE WORDED BY A MASTER.

IN FATE'S EYES, INDEED, WE ARE ALL THRALLS. AYE, EVEN THE ALL-FATHER!

NAY, FARE THEE WELL, HEIMDALL. THOR IS THRALL TO NONE!

AND AS THOR'S URU HAMMER BEGIN'S TO SPAN DIMENSIONS, HE DOES NOT HEAR HEIMDALL'S LAST WORDS...

"...A RASH YOUTH OF GLORIOUS FOLLY. BUT STILL, WITH HIS KEEN METTLE AND STUBBORN WILL, HE IS THE BOLDEST OF US ALL!"

MIDGARD!

LIKE A FALCON, THE GOD TURNS...

...AND SWOOPS TOWARD THE RAGING SEA.

ALIGHTING UPON THE MAST OF RUNOLF'S BATTERED LONGBOAT...

...THOR COMMANDS!

NOW YE ELEMENTAL FORCES, NOW AND ONCE AGAIN, THE GOD OF THUNDER SUMMONS YE TO CEASE THY HEAVENLY WARFARE!

THE ROILING SEA IS INSTANTLY BECALMED, AND IN THE SKY THE SUN BREAKS...

SO UNEXPECTED IS THE QUIET THAT IT FRIGHTENS RUNOLF FOR THE MOMENT AS WOULD A SUDDEN SCREAM...

...THEN LOOKING SKYWARDS, HE BEHOLDS...

THOR! BE PRAISED! I HAD LOST ALL BEARINGS IN THE DRIVING RAIN! AND ALL HOPE!

RUNOLF, THOU NEEDS NOW BUT A SUMMER BREEZE TO SET THEE TOWARDS THY HOMELAND!

THE MOMENT IS GLORIOUS EVEN FOR A GOD. DIVINE COMPASSION HAS STRUGGLED WITH FATE AND WRESTED A MAN'S LIFE FREE FROM THE MAW OF DESTINY!

AND THEN...

...IT RISES SUDDENLY...

...WITH A CRASHING ROAR THAT ECHOES THE GOD'S OWN THUNDER AND BREAKS THE NEWLY-SETTLED TRAN-QUILITY...

...THROUGH A SHEET OF WATER...

BY ODIN'S SINEW, A SEA STALLION!!

AND MJOLNIR STRIKES!

TO LITTLE AVAIL...

HWHNH!

VILE SPAWN OF YMIR'S ICY BLOOD! DOST THOU TAKE THE BRUNT OF MJOLNIR...

WH

HACKH

...AND TURN THY MUZZLE STILL UNHURT?!?!

TH

UMP

WHAT WITCHCRAFT...!

UNHMF!

SPLASH

CRASH

THE BEAST EVINCES AN AWESOME ENDURANCE FOR THE BATTLE...

...BUT THOR IS A GOD, THE VERY ESSENCE OF MATCHLESS STRENGTH--

YET, EVEN A GOD'S STRENGTH HAS ITS LIMITS WHEN AIR IS LACKING...

NOW--AS THE BRACKISH SEAWATER DRIVES BURNING THROUGH HIS NOSTRILS, AND THE CONSTRICTING TAIL OF THE BEAST CRUSHES THE LAST BREATH FROM BURSTING LUNGS--

THOR SENDS A FINAL, DESPERATE COMMAND TO THE LIGHTNING STORM AND THUNDER...

...AND THE ELEMENTS RESPOND WITH THE SPEED OF THEIR MASTER'S THOUGHT...

KRAK

HNNH

...STRIKING THE MONSTROUS STALLION! IN ITS AGONY, IT THRASHES THE WATERS...

...SWAMPING THE LONGBOAT OF RUNOLF...

PLASH!

...AND LOOSING ITS GRIP UPON THOR.

THE BEAST IS DEAD!

THIS AIR IS SWEETER THAN ANY I HAVE EVER TASTED!

NOW TO COMPLETE MY TASK AND ESCORT...

RUNOLF!

...HIS HEART IS BEATEN DOWN, LIKE THE WRACK OF THE VIKING SHIP ON THE WAVES BELOW, AS HE RECALLS WISE HEIMDALL'S WORDS,

"FATE RENDERS HEAVY JUDGMENT, FRIEND THOR, SWIFT AND UNQUESTIONABLE"

ASGARD!

THE LESSON THOU HAST LEARNED THIS DAY, SON OF MY FLESH MUST BE ENGRAVED UPON THY MEMORY FOR ALL ETERNITY.

EACH YEAR AT THIS TIME THOU SHALT WITHDRAW UNTO THOSE VERY NORNS WHOSE POWERS THOU DIDST DOUBT.

SO BE IT UNTIL THE ALL-FATHER RESOLVES OTHERWISE!

AGAIN THE WATERS DARKEN...

...ALL HAS BEEN REVEALED.

ONCE MORE I SEE MYSELF A SORRY PLAYTHING TO THE FATES, AND I AM HUMBLED...

...STILL, SAVE FOR THEE, GUARDIANS OF THE WELL, THOR YIELDS TO NONE. FAREWELL.

ADRIFT UPON THE SEA OF DESTINY, IS THERE MAN OR GOD SO PROUD THAT FEELS NO FEAR...

...ANXIOUS OF THE JOURNEY'S END...

...WONDERING WHAT FATE HAS WILLED?

"COME, SISTERS, THE FUTURE WAITS."

The Mighty Thor Annual #10 cover original art
by Bob Hall & Josef Rubinstein

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

The Mighty Thor #327 cover original art
by Alan Kupperberg & Alan Weiss

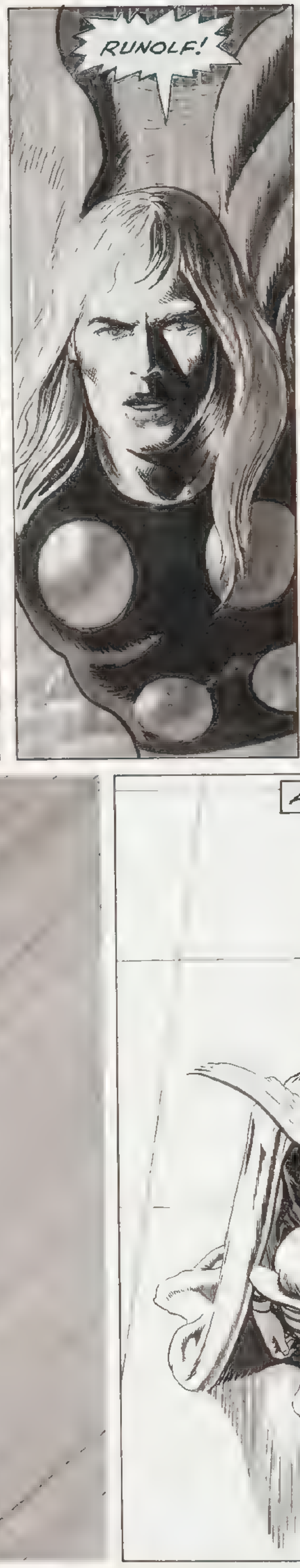
Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

The Mighty Thor #318, page 12 original art
by Gil Kane & Pablo Marcos

THESE PEOPLE WANT TO THANK YOU, THOR. YOU SAVED THEIR TOWN... AND IT'S ALL THEY'VE GOT...
THY GRATITUDE IS COMFORTING, MORTALS, BUT MISPLACED.
FOR, HE WHO POSSESSES THE POWER TO DO GOOD--
--IS BOUND BY THE DIGNITY OF CONSCIENCE TO EXERCISE THAT POWER.
NOW, I SHALL SEE IF I CAN RIGHT YON STATUES INTO THEIR PROPER POSITIONS.
WOW. Y'KNOW... THAT'S THE KIND OF CORNINESS WE COULD USE BY THE TRUCKLOAD IN THIS WORLD.
AT FIRST, HIS EYES FIRMLY SET ON THE STATUES AHEAD--
-- THOR DOES NOT NOTICE THE NORN STONES AT HIS FEET.
BUT AS HE PASSES... THE STONES BEGIN TO GLOW...
...AND THE SINISTER FIRES RADIATING FROM THEM CATCH THE PERIPHERY OF HIS VISION.
EH--? THESE GLOWING STONES... BUT WHAT MANNER OF--?
NORN STONES--OF THE SAME TYPE WHICH ONCE CONFERRED MYSTICAL POWERS TO A WITCHDOCTOR WHO CALLED HIMSELF THE DEMON...

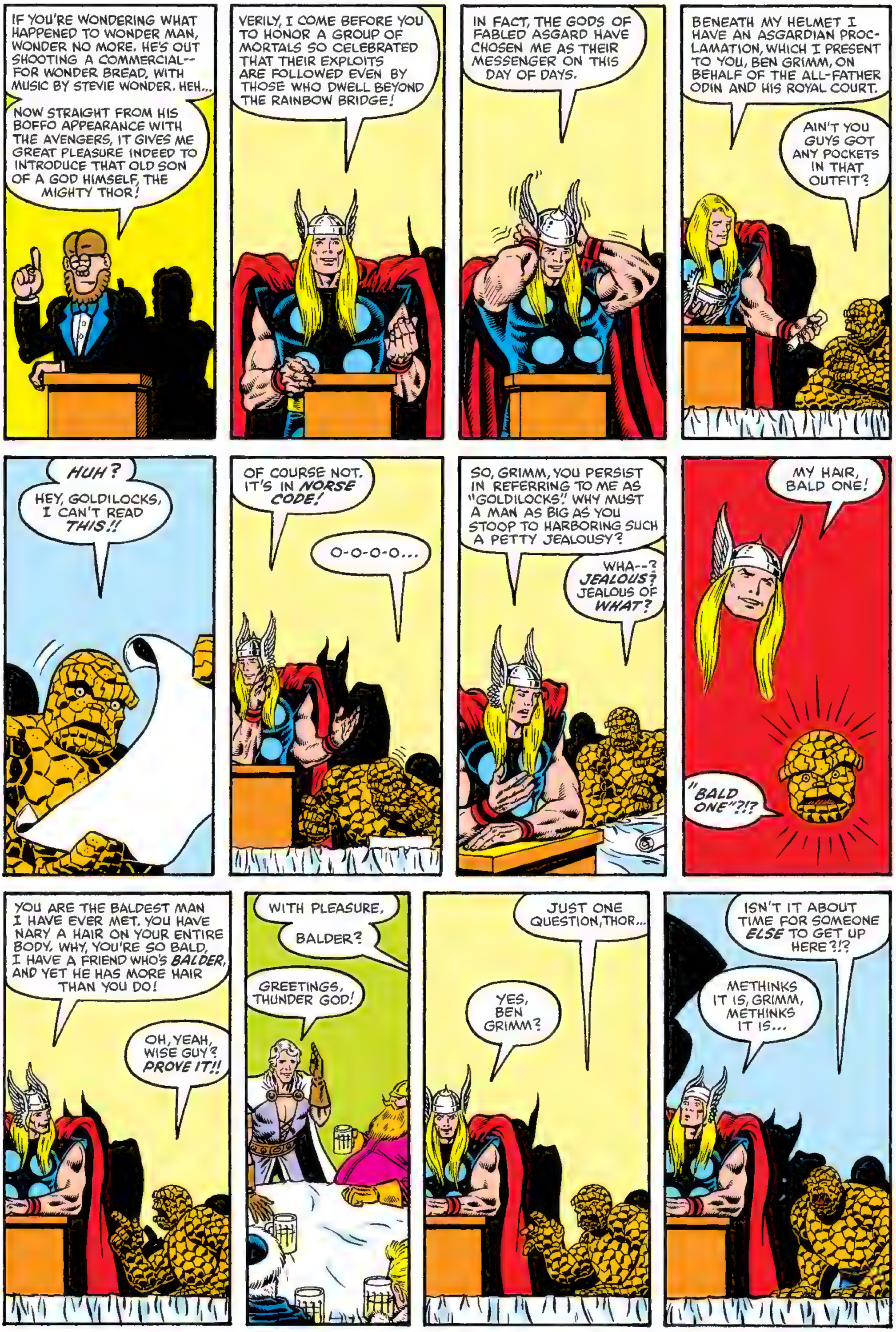
Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

Bizarre Adventures #32, page 13 original art
by John Bolton



Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

In 1982's *Fantastic Four Roast*, writer/cartoonist Fred Hembeck "roasted" Marvel's First Family with the aid of many artists, including this page with Keith Pollard.


IF YOU'RE WONDERING WHAT HAPPENED TO WONDER MAN, WONDER NO MORE. HE'S OUT SHOOTING A COMMERCIAL-- FOR WONDER BREAD, WITH MUSIC BY STEVIE WONDER. HEH...
NOW STRAIGHT FROM HIS BOFFO APPEARANCE WITH THE AVENGERS, IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE INDEED TO INTRODUCE THAT OLD SON OF A GOD HIMSELF, THE MIGHTY THOR!
VERILY, I COME BEFORE YOU TO HONOR A GROUP OF MORTALS SO CELEBRATED THAT THEIR EXPLOITS ARE FOLLOWED EVEN BY THOSE WHO DWELL BEYOND THE RAINBOW BRIDGE!
IN FACT, THE GODS OF FABLED ASGARD HAVE CHOSEN ME AS THEIR MESSENGER ON THIS DAY OF DAYS.
BENEATH MY HELMET I HAVE AN ASGARDIAN PROCLAMATION, WHICH I PRESENT TO YOU, BEN GRIMM, ON BEHALF OF THE ALL-FATHER ODIN AND HIS ROYAL COURT.
AIN'T YOU GUYS GOT ANY POCKETS IN THAT OUTFIT?
HUH?
HEY, GOLDILOCKS, I CAN'T READ THIS!!
OF COURSE NOT. IT'S IN NORSE CODE!
O-O-O-O...
SO, GRIMM, YOU PERSIST IN REFERRING TO ME AS "GOLDILOCKS!" WHY MUST A MAN AS BIG AS YOU STOOP TO HARBORING SUCH A PETTY JEALOUSY?
WHA--? JEALOUS? JEALOUS OF WHAT?
MY HAIR, BALD ONE!
"BALD ONE"?!?
YOU ARE THE BALDEST MAN I HAVE EVER MET. YOU HAVE NARY A HAIR ON YOUR ENTIRE BODY. WHY, YOU'RE SO BALD, I HAVE A FRIEND WHO'S BALDER, AND YET HE HAS MORE HAIR THAN YOU DO!
OH, YEAH, WISE GUY? PROVE IT!!
WITH PLEASURE, BALDER?
GREETINGS, THUNDER GOD!
JUST ONE QUESTION, THOR...
YES, BEN GRIMM?
ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO GET UP HERE?!?
METHINKS IT IS, GRIMM, METHINKS IT IS...

BIOGRAPHIES

DOUG MOENCH

A prolific writer over the last four decades, Doug Moench has made indelible contributions to Marvel and DC characters as well as developing his own creator-owned properties. After starting his career as a film reviewer for the Chicago *Sun-Times*, by 1971 he was ready to make his way into comics. Like many other writers of the time, he broke in with a story for Warren horror mag *Eerie*, after which he quickly found a home at Marvel. His initial efforts were focused on Marvel's black-and-white magazine line, including *Rampaging Hulk*, *Planet of the Apes* and *Tales of the Zombie*.

Moench's penchant for writing horror tales led to a long tenure on *Werewolf By Night*, near the end of which he introduced the brooding anti-hero Moon Knight. At around the same time, he and Rich Buckler launched Deathlok in the pages of *Astonishing Tales*. His other major achievement in the '70s was his tenure on *Master of Kung Fu*, a 10-year long saga praised by critics as a high-water mark of that era's comic storytelling.

In the midst of his work on mainline Marvel titles, he and longtime art partner Paul Gulacy developed *Six For Sirius*, a creator-owned sci-fi series on Marvel's Epic imprint; its success spawned a sequel, *Six For Sirius II*. He also co-created and wrote *Aztec Ace*, a popular indie title published by Eclipse.

By the mid-'80s, Moench had moved to DC Comics, where he took firm control of the Batman franchise, writing both *Batman* and *Detective Comics* for four years. Other DC highlights included *Mister Miracle*, *The Wanderers*, *Omega Men* and several highly regarded *Elseworlds* graphic novels. In the '90s, he returned to Batman for a seven-year run, after which he took on *Catwoman*. His most recent credit for Marvel was *Master of Kung Fu: Hellfire Apocalypse*, a 2003 limited series that reunited him with longtime art partner and *MOKF* alum Gulacy.

KEITH POLLARD

One of its most high-profile artists in the late '70s and early '80s, Keith Pollard's tenure at Marvel was notable for his sleek, refined renderings of the company's most iconic characters. He broke in at Marvel in 1974, drawing such characters as Deathlok in *Astonishing Tales*, Shang-Chi in *Master of Kung Fu*, and the super-hero action of *Black Goliath*, *Ms. Marvel*, and Black Panther in *Jungle Action*. After a stint on the black-and-white *Rampaging Hulk* magazine, Pollard was ushered into the starting lineup of creators on three of Marvel's flagship titles.

Starting in 1978, Pollard provided breakdown art on *Fantastic Four* for the legendary Joe Sinnott to finish. Soon after landing his *FF* gig, he began penciling *The Amazing Spider-Man* and then took the reins from "Big" John Buscema on *Thor*, starting a run that would encompass the epic "Eternals Saga" storyline. All in all, Pollard's hand guided the visuals of these three prime Marvel titles simultaneously, and his tenures on each book are memorable additions to each title's legacy.

In the early '80s, Pollard took on a new stable of heroes at DC, drawing several issues of *Green Lantern* and launching *The Vigilante* with writer Marv Wolfman. He returned to regular series work at Marvel in 1989, once again drawing *Fantastic Four*. By 1995, Pollard retired from comics, although he is currently appearing at conventions and doing commissioned art for his fans.

ALAN KUPPERBERG

Alan Kupperberg's experience with all facets of writing, art, advertising and design helped make him a "jack of all trades" in comics, with credits as a writer, penciler, inker and letterer. He began his career in the early 1970s in DC Comics' production department and Neal Adams and Dick Giordano's Continuity Associates studio. Kupperberg's first art credit was a single-page story in *Young Romance* #183 (June 1972). In 1974, he moved to Atlas/Seaboard where he served as a letterer, colorist, editor and production manager. After Atlas/Seaboard's demise, Kupperberg started working at Marvel, including penciling an adaptation of Robert Bloch's "The Living Dead" in *Vampire Tales* #5. He was a frequent contributor to *Crazy Magazine*, which often featured his scripts for the "Obnoxio the Clown Fun Pages." Clowns seemed to be a preoccupation for Kupperberg, as he would illustrate Frenchy the Evil Clown in *National Lampoon*, and would write, draw and letter the 1983 *Obnoxio vs. the X-Men* one-shot. Kupperberg racked up an impressive amount of fill-in and pinch-hit jobs on Marvel titles like *Captain America*, *Defenders*, *Doctor Strange* and *Avengers*, plus short runs on *Amazing Spider-Man*, *Marvel Two-In-One*, *Thor* and *Spitfire and the Troubleshooters*. He also drew several issues of *What If?* and the four-issue miniseries *Iceman*, and is perhaps best known for long runs on *Invaders* and DC's *Blue Devil*. Kupperberg also served as illustrator of the syndicated comic strips *Hulk*, *Howard the Duck*, and *Little Orphan Annie*. Kupperberg passed away in 2015.

PETER B. GILLIS

Peter B. Gillis' notched sustained runs on *Doctor Strange*, *Micronauts* and *The Defenders*, but it was the world of *Strikeforce: Morituri* that remains his most lasting contribution to comics. Starting in 1978, Gillis wrote fill-in issues of various Marvel titles, as well as periodic issues of *Captain America*, *Marvel Two-In-One* and *Super-Villain Team-Up*. He also contributed to several issues of *What If?*, with highlights including "What If Spider-Man Had Stopped the Burglar Who Killed His Uncle?" and "What If Hulk's Girlfriend Jarella Had Not Died?"

In 1983, Gillis began his association with independent comics publisher First Comics by adapting the Broadway sci-fi/comics fantasy play *Warp* with Frank Brunner. Next for First, Gillis wrote *Shatter*, the industry's first all-digitally produced comic done in collaboration with Mike Saenz. Meanwhile at Marvel, Gillis settled into a long run writing *The Defenders*, the 1984 relaunch of *Micronauts* and the first eight issues of an *Eternals* limited series. He began writing *Doctor Strange* in 1985, and hung with the series as it transferred to titles including *Strange Tales* and *Doctor Strange, Sorcerer Supreme*.

Gillis' most celebrated work, *Strikeforce: Morituri*, debuted in

1986. Drawn by Brent Anderson, it told the story of a cadre of soldiers granted super powers to fight off an alien invasion, though at the eventual cost of their own lives. Gillis wrapped up his comic-writing career in the late '80s and early '90s, writing *Tailgunner Jo* and *Gammarauders* for DC, and stories for Marvel anthologies *Marvel Comics Presents*, *Solo Avengers* and *What The?*

JOHN BOLTON

Versatile in watercolors, oil painting and illustration, John Bolton has earned renown as one of the comic industry's greatest fantasy and horror artists. Born in 1951 in London, England, Bolton recalls sketching and painting from his earliest years as a child. After graduating from art school, he began working in the British comics scene, with some of his work published in the influential magazine *Warrior*. Recruited by Marvel editor Ralph Macchio to bring his work to the U.S., Bolton drew Kull and Thor stories in *Bizarre Adventures*, Marada the She-Wolf in *Epic Illustrated* and launched *Black Dragon* with Chris Claremont under Marvel's Epic imprint. In 1986, Bolton collaborated with Claremont again, this time on fan-favorite backup stories in *Classic X-Men*. His last credits for Marvel in the 1980s were the graphic novel *Something Strange* with writer Ann Nocenti and a pair of stories in *Clive Barker's Hellraiser*. In the '90s, Bolton illustrated the first issue of Neil Gaiman's *Books of Magic*, and collaborated with *Evil Dead* director Sam Raimi on the Dark Horse series *Army of Darkness*. Further credits included the *Batman: Manbat* miniseries, as well as the Vertigo titles *Gifts of the Night* and *User* and the graphic novel *Sandman Presents: The Furies*. His most recent effort, the macabre *Shame* in collaboration with writer Lovern Kindzierski, is published by Renegade Arts.

STEVEN GRANT

A self-described "accidental" comic book writer, Steven Grant dabbled in comics writing in the early '70s for indie imprints before getting work as a music and film critic for newspapers in his hometown of Madison, Wisconsin. He kept in touch with his comics-loving associates in the CPL Gang, who urged him to go further in the comics industry. A 1976 meeting with Marvel editor Marv Wolfman didn't yield any opportunities, but while visiting CPL pal Roger Stern in 1979 opportunity struck. Stern, an editor newly ensconced at Marvel, offered Grant a gig writing an issue of *Marvel Two-In-One* that was running late. After turning in his script for the Thing/Moon Knight team-up, more work came his way as he helped Stern get his titles back on schedule. His first regular gigs were Spider-Man's adventures in *Marvel Team-Up* and the young readers book *Spidey Super Stories*. Grant also wrote issues of *Spider-Woman*, *Incredible Hulk*, *Battlestar Galactica*, and he co-wrote the *Marvel Super Hero Contest of Champions* limited series. One of his biggest projects was scribing the *Life of Pope John Paul II* one-shot in 1983. That same year he launched his own character, Whisper, for Capital Comics and then First Comics, and was handed the reins to *American Flagg!* by its creator Howard Chaykin. In 1986, Grant made a huge splash with artist Mike Zeck on their *Punisher* miniseries. The fan-favorite series ignited the Punisher's popularity, raising him to the ranks of one of Marvel's most popular characters. Grant followed up with the acclaimed *Punisher: Return to Big Nothing* graphic novel and turns on *Punisher War Journal*, *Punisher War Zone* and the ongoing *Punisher* series. He branched out to DC in the '90s, rebooting *Challengers of the Unknown* and *Manhunter*. Grant's series *2 Guns*, published by BOOM! Studios, was adapted into a 2013 film starring Denzel Washington and Mark Wahlberg.

MARK GRUENWALD

Few can lay claim to the influence that Mark Gruenwald had on Marvel as an editor, writer and artist during the 1980s and '90s. Born in 1953 in Wisconsin, Gruenwald's love of comics manifested in a fanzine titled *Omniverse*, which led to writing articles for the DC-published fanzine *Amazing World of DC Comics*. In 1978, he was hired by Jim Shooter to serve as an assistant editor at Marvel. In addition, Gruenwald also scripted several titles. He was ongoing writer of *Spider-Woman* in 1978-79, he kicked off a long run co-scripting *Marvel Two-In-One* with the "Project Pegasus" arc, and he co-wrote a handful of stories in *What If?* and *Thor*. Early in his career, Gruenwald also penciled a number of titles, including issues of *Questprobe*, *Incredible Hulk* and *Marvel Team-Up*. His major art credit was drawing the 1983 *Hawkeye* miniseries, which he also scripted.

A well-known continuity hound and office jokester, Gruenwald gave T-shirts emblazoned with the catchphrase "Continuity or Bust" to his office peers. His deep love of the Marvel mythos didn't stop with T-shirts. As a writer, he delved deep into Marvel's past with his "Untold Tales of the Marvel Universe" backup stories in *What If?*, as well as the secret origin of the High Evolutionary in the 1989 "Evolutionary War" event. Gruenwald's biggest achievement in grappling with the encyclopedic history of Marvel was his development of *The Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe*, a series compiling the backgrounds of virtually every Marvel character. Eager fans devoured *OHOTMU*, and the series' success led to multiple sequels and updates that continue today.

Gruenwald's biggest accomplishment as a writer came with *Captain America*, a title which he wrote for an astonishing 137-issue run from 1985-1995. He also kicked off long runs on *Quasar* and the New Universe title *D.P. 7*. His critically acclaimed magnum opus, *Squadron Supreme*, a 12-issue miniseries, reestablished the alternate-reality Marvel team. When Tom DeFalco was named editor-in-chief in 1988, Gruenwald became his second-in-command with the title of executive editor. As an editor, he worked closely to mentor young writers, bringing an unforgettable sense of fun to the deadline slog. Tragically, Gruenwald passed away in 1996 due to an unknown heart ailment. In his will, he requested his ashes be mixed with ink used in the first printing of the *Squadron Supreme* trade paperback.

BOB HALL

Bob Hall has spent the entirety of his professional career balancing his twin passions of drawing and theater. A graduate of University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Hall arrived in New York City in the early '70s to pursue a career in theater. To augment his income, he took his art skills to comic books. He studied illustration under John Buscema, a tutelage which—combined with his theater-born joy of storytelling—helped set him on the path to working for Marvel. Hall's first gigs included penciling multiple issues of *The Champions* and *Super-Villain Team-Up* and annuals for *Fantastic Four* and *Thor*. He also served as

an editor for a brief time, with Jack Kirby's *Devil Dinosaur* falling under his purview. In 1980, Hall's off-Broadway play, *The Passion of Dracula*, was adapted for Showtime's *Broadway on Showtime* cable television series. His art career took flight in the '80s, as Hall drew issues of *Amazing Spider-Man*, *Marvel Team-Up* and *Spectacular Spider-Man*, but his most memorable credit came during a pair of stints drawing *Avengers*. Other high-profile credits in the decade came with the *West Coast Avengers* miniseries and Mark Gruenwald's *Squadron Supreme* epic. Hall would return to the Avengers with the now-classic *Marvel Graphic Novel #27: Emperor Doom*, written by David Michelinie. In the '90s, Hall went to Valiant, where he wrote and drew *Shadowman* and *Armed and Dangerous*. In addition to his comics work, Hall has acted in and directed Shakespeare productions across the decades, culminating in his founding of the Flatwater Shakespeare Company in Lincoln, Nebraska in 2001. He serves as the company's Artistic Director and in 2010 received the honor of Artist of the Year from the Nebraska Arts Council's Governor's Arts Awards.

GIL KANE

A gentleman and master of the medium, Gil Kane gained elite status as a comic artist through the course of a storied career. The signature smooth and sinuous anatomy of his characters, vertiginous camera angles and dynamic action present in every page gave Kane's work a language all its own.

Born in Latvia in 1926 as Eli Katz, his family moved to Brooklyn, New York, three years later. He studied art in high school but left when he sensed an opportunity was in the offing with MLJ Comics (later Archie Comics). He would also do spot work for the other studios, but with World War II roaring, the young man enlisted in the Army and served in the Pacific.

Upon his return, he permanently adopted the pseudonym Gil Kane and got back to the business of creating comics. By the late '50s, Kane truly began to make his mark, introducing the new Green Lantern, Hal Jordan, in the pages of *Showcase*. To fill in time in his work schedule, he made a pitch to DC Comics to revive the Golden Age character Doll Man, this time updated with the name The Atom, and here, too, he struck gold.

His first work for Marvel included Hulk and Captain America stories, as well as a stint on *Captain Marvel*, which to Kane represented some of his finest work to date. He would gain greater acclaim for his run on *The Amazing Spider-Man* that included the first comics to buck the Comics Code. A few years later, he was also behind the drawing board for the pivotal "Death of Gwen Stacy" story line.

The '70s were a particularly fertile period for Kane, as he became Marvel's top cover artist, delivering dozens of iconic images. Teaming once again with his *Captain Marvel* collaborator, Roy Thomas, Kane gave life to the newly christened hero Adam Warlock and introduced the kung fu action hero Iron Fist.

Always searching to expand the audience, format and sophistication of the medium, Kane conceived and illustrated the independent graphic novel *Blackmark* in 1971. He also created the award-winning daily newspaper strip *Star Hawks* with writer Ron Goulart.

Much to the pleasure of comic-book readers, Kane's work appeared regularly until 2000, with brief stops in the '70s and '80s when he worked in TV animation. He was ushered into the Eisner Hall of Fame in 1997 and died three years later at the age of 74, leaving behind a legacy that has inspired generations of fans and artists.

GREG LAROCQUE

Baltimore native Greg LaRocque broke into comics in 1981 at DC, drawing an OMAC backup feature in *Warlord* as well as stories for the publisher's many anthology titles. By the end of the year, he expanded his freelance portfolio to include work at Marvel, with issues of *ROM*, *Moon Knight* and *Micronauts*. He drew a handful of *Avengers* issues the following year, including the classic Hawkeye/Ant-Man team-up in *Avengers* #223. That same year, LaRocque penciled one of the more memorable issues of *What If?*, pondering the question "What If the Avengers Had Become the Pawns of Korvac?" He also drew several issues of *Spectacular Spider-Man* and served lengthy stints as regular artist on *Marvel Team-Up* and *Power Man and Iron Fist*. After launching the series *Web of Spider-Man* and drawing its first five issues, LaRocque moved over to DC to take on *Legion of Super-Heroes* and *The Flash*, the latter title including a redesign of the Flash's costume. After starting his own art studio and publishing outfit, Exiled Studio, LaRocque reunited with DC and the Flash in 2011 to draw a *DC Retroactive* one-shot.

ALAN ZELENETZ

Alan Zelenetz enjoyed a prolific career writing at Marvel in the 1980s. He wrote issues of *Moon Knight*, *Avengers* and *Master of Kung Fu,* but most of his work was outside of super heroes in the sci-fi and fantasy genre. His tales of the son of Odin appeared *Bizarre Adventures*, a quartet of Annuals, a run of stories featuring the Warriors Three in *Marvel Fanfare* and an eight-issue run on *Thor*. He also wrote several stories in *The Savage Sword of Conan*, nearly the full run of the 1983 *Kull the Conqueror* series, multiple issues of *King Conan/Conan the King* and the 1989 graphic novel *Kull: The Vale of Shadow*. Zelenetz paired the Asgardian hero Thor with the Hyborian Age's Conan in an iconic team-up in *What If?* #39, "What If Thor of Asgard Had Met Conan the Barbarian?" He also helped spearhead the exhaustive *The Official Handbook of the Conan Universe*. In 1984, Zelenetz collaborated with writer Carl Potts and artist Frank Cirocco on *The Alien Legion*, a sci-fi series that was published under Marvel's Epic imprint. The writer wrote the entire twenty-issue run of the first series, as well as the 1987 graphic novel *The Alien Legion: A Grey Day to Die*. Zelenetz's last credit in comics was as author of the 1990 Epic graphic novel *Jhereg*. He left comics to become an educator and administrator, and in 2003 started the film production company Ovie Entertainment.

Biographies researched and written by John Rhett Thomas

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THE GOLDEN AGE

As the Great Depression wore on and the specter of war hung over America, a new storytelling medium was born: the comic book. Within their four-color pages, larger-than-life super heroes could make short work of America's foes, giving readers of all ages hope for victory against the real-life enemies that faced the United States. At the forefront of this new medium was Timely Comics, a young company staffed by such legendary creators as Carl Burgos, Bill Everett, Joe Simon, Jack Kirby and Stan Lee. These trailblazing talents birthed a vast array of characters that would give rise to the Marvel Universe!

GOLDEN AGE ALL-WINNERS VOLS. 1-4
GOLDEN AGE CAPTAIN AMERICA VOLS. 1-6
GOLDEN AGE DARING MYSTERY VOLS. 1-2
GOLDEN AGE HUMAN TORCH VOLS. 1-3
GOLDEN AGE MARVEL COMICS VOLS. 1-7
GOLDEN AGE MYSTIC COMICS VOL. 1
GOLDEN AGE SUB-MARINER VOLS. 1-3
GOLDEN AGE U.S.A. COMICS VOLS. 1-2
GOLDEN AGE YOUNG ALLIES VOLS. 1-2

THE ATLAS ERA

Seeing super heroes waning, Timely Comics evolved into Atlas Comics and took on a vast new range of genres: science-fiction tales of outer space adventures; realistic war comics; buxom jungle heroines; horror comics that would become the center of a moral panic that rocked the industry; and romance comics for the emerging teen audience. Even the classic costumed heroes of the Golden Age retooled to take on the threat of Communism. From Western gunfighters to crime to horror, the Atlas Era had it all!

ATLAS ERA BATTLEFIELD VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA BLACK KNIGHT/YELLOW CLAW VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA HEROES VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA JUNGLE ADVENTURE VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA MENACE VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA STRANGE TALES VOLS. 1-6
ATLAS ERA TALES TO ASTONISH VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA TALES OF SUSPENSE VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA VENUS VOL. 1

THE MARVEL AGE

In August 1961, change hit newsstands: *The Fantastic Four* #1 did not feature the squeaky-clean heroes of yesteryear. They were real characters placed in extraordinary circumstances. They lived together, they fought among themselves — and sometimes, they even lost to the bad guys. This was more than a change in attitude: It was the beginning of something entirely different — the beginning of the Marvel Age of Comics!

Thanks to the fertile imaginations of Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and others, an unending list of heroes followed the FF with ever-increasing acclaim and popularity: the Amazing Spider-Man, the Mighty Thor, the Incredible Hulk, Daredevil, Iron Man and the X-Men, to name but a few. These were the Marvel heroes, born of conflict and a continuous struggle to balance human lives with superhuman responsibilities.

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN VOLS. 1-23
ANT-MAN/GIANT-MAN VOLS. 1-3
THE AVENGERS VOLS. 1-21
THE BLACK PANTHER VOLS. 1-3
BROTHER VOODOO VOL. 1
CAPTAIN AMERICA VOLS. 1-13
CAPTAIN MARVEL VOLS. 1-6
THE CHAMPIONS VOL. 1
DAREDEVIL VOLS. 1-15
DAZZLER VOLS. 1-2
DEATHLOK VOL. 1
THE DEFENDERS VOLS. 1-8
DOCTOR STRANGE VOLS. 1-10
THE FANTASTIC FOUR VOLS. 1-23
GHOST RIDER VOLS. 1-3
HOWARD THE DUCK VOL. 1
THE HUMAN TORCH VOLS. 1-2
THE INCREDIBLE HULK VOLS. 1-15
THE INHUMANS VOLS. 1-2
THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN VOLS. 1-14
IRON FIST VOLS. 1-2
KA-ZAR VOLS. 1-2
KILLRAVEN VOL. 1
LUKE CAGE VOLS. 1-3
MARVEL RARITIES VOL. 1
MARVEL TEAM-UP VOLS. 1-6
MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE VOLS. 1-6
THE MIGHTY THOR VOLS. 1-21
MS. MARVEL VOLS. 1-2
NICK FURY, AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. VOLS. 1-3
NOT BRAND ECHH VOL. 1
RAWHIDE KID VOLS. 1-2
THE SAVAGE SHE-HULK VOLS. 1-2
SGT. FURY VOLS. 1-4
THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN VOLS. 1-4
SPIDER-WOMAN VOLS. 1-2
THE SILVER SURFER VOLS. 1-2
THE SUB-MARINER VOLS. 1-8
THE TOMB OF DRACULA VOL. 1
WARLOCK VOLS. 1-2
THE X-MEN VOLS. 1-8
THE UNCANNY X-MEN VOLS. 1-14

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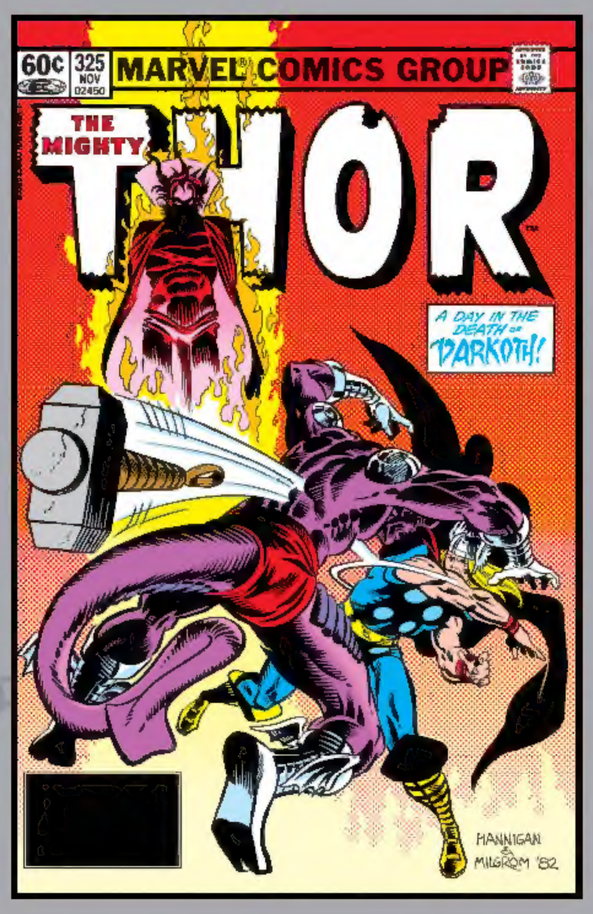
THOR
"A KINGDOM LOST!"

60¢ 319 MAY 02450
MARVEL® COMICS GROUP
THE MIGHTY
THOR
THE ZANIAC CRAVES BLOOD!
pollard
YOU MAY HATE HIS NAME--BUT YOU'LL NEVER FORGET HIM!

60¢ 321 JULY 02450
MARVEL® COMICS GROUP
THE MIGHTY
THOR
DIE, THUNDER GOD! RIMTHURSAR COMMANDS IT!
MADNESS IS... THE MENAGERIE!

60¢ 322 AUG 02450
MARVEL® COMICS GROUP
THE MIGHTY
THOR
TO FIGHT A FRIEND! THOR versus HEIMDALL GUARDIAN of the RAINBOW BRIDGE!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THOR
A DAY IN THE DEATH OF DARKOTH!
HANNIGAN & MILGROM '82

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THE MIGHTY
THOR
THE SCARLET SCARAB--RAIDING LOST ARTIFACTS...?
OVER THOR'S DEAD BODY!

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THE MIGHTY
THOR
LAST STAND ON EARTH!